A THIRD-WORLD COUNTRY FACING INDIGENOUS INSURGENCIES:
THE MALIAN TOUAREG INSURGENCY

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by

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The Republic of Mali since 1961 has been experiencing insurgency carried out by an ethnic group called Touareg in its northern regions, lying in the Sahara valley. That situation has significantly impaired the security, stability and development of the three northern regions. Mali as one of the world's poorest country faces a serious challenge how to maintain the balance of development and maintain its territorial integrity, especially when one of the Touareg goals is to fight and obtain their independence. Considering the strategic importance of the Sahara valley, which becomes more and more the terrain of insecurity, smuggling (drug, weapons and commercial products) and the area of operation of the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) making the situation a very complex one to be solved.

As response to those facts, the government of Mali in its ways to find a definite solution to the increasing insecurity and handle the Touareg insurgency forever has involved all of its instruments of National power trying to get to the strategic and operational goals. However, these recent years have seen a regional involvement to address the issue and threat in the Sahara. In addition to Mali, Niger also suffers from the Touareg instability, the AQIM comes as a common threat to Mali, Niger, Algeria and Mauritania. This thesis explores how a poor country can use its instruments of national power to definitely solve an internal insurgency while fighting a terrorist Organization, all operating alongside in an uncontrolled area called the Sahara.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not
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ABSTRACT

A THIRD-WORLD COUNTRY FACING INDIGENOUS INSURGENCIES: THE MALIAN TOUAREG INSURGENCY, by Maj Joachin Famakan Cissoko, 104 pages.

The Republic of Mali since 1961 has been experiencing insurgency carried out by an ethnic group called Touareg in its northern regions, lying in the Sahara valley. That situation has significantly impaired the security, stability and development of the three northern regions. Mali as one of the world's poorest country faces a serious challenge how to maintain the balance of development and maintain its territorial integrity, especially when one of the Touareg goals is to fight and obtain their independence. Considering the strategic importance of the Sahara valley, which becomes more and more the terrain of insecurity, smuggling (drug, weapons and commercial products) and the area of operation of the l-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) making the situation a very complex one to be solved.

As response to those facts, the government of Mali in its ways to find a definite solution to the increasing insecurity and handle the Touareg insurgency forever has involved all of its instruments of National power trying to get to the strategic and operational goals. However, these recent years have seen a regional involvement to address the issue and threat in the Sahara. In addition to Mali, Niger also suffers from the Touareg instability, the AQIM comes as a common threat to Mali, Niger, Algeria and Mauritania. This thesis explores, how a poor country can use its instruments of national power to definitely solve an internal insurgency and while fighting a terrorist Organization all operating alongside in an uncontrolled area called the Sahara.

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Additionally I would like to recognize the precious moral support and encouragement of my Family in Mali, my Father Sylvain Cissoko and my Mother Suzane Traore, without which the completion of this thesis would be hard. I also thank my fellow officers of the Malian Army, those who have accepted to share with me their personal experiences during their duty in the Sahara regions.

Thank you and may God bless all of us .

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ACRONYMS

AAA        Africa Aid Afrique

AFC        African financial community, (In French , Communaute Financiere D'Afrique CFA).

AQIM        Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

CMDT        Compagnie Malienne pour le development du Textile. (Malian textile Development Company).

DAC        Democratic Alliance of Change,

DIME        Diplomacy, Informational, Military , Economy.

ECOWAS        Economic Community of West African States.

FIAA        The Islamic Arab Front of Azawad

FM        Field Manual

FNLA        National Front for Liberation of Azawad

FPLA        Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad

FULA        The Autonomous Base of the United Front for Liberation of Azawad

GDP        Gross Domestic Product

GIA        Armed Islamic Group, in French Groupe Islamique Armé

GSPC        Groupe Salafist Pour la Predilection et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat).

HUICOMA        Huilerie Cotoniere du Mali.( Cotton oil mill of Mali).

HUMINT        Human Intelligence

IA        Interagency

IED        Improvised Explosive Device

IFM        International Monetary Fund

IFR        International France Radio (Radio France Internationale)

IGO        International Governemental Organization

| | |
|---|---|
| ISR | Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance. |
| MENAO | Middle East and North Africa Organization |
| MFDC | Mouvement des Forces Democatic de la Casamance (Casamance Democratic force Movement) |
| MJN | Niger Movement for Justice ( Mouvement Nigerien pour la justice) |
| MSR | Main Supply Routes |
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| ORTM | National Radio Television |
| POW | Prisoner of war |
| PSI | Pan Sahel Initiative |
| PSPSDN | Programme Special pour la paix et la Securite au Nord Mali" or (the Special Program for Peace and Security in the Northern Mali) |
| SEC | Security, Exchanges, and Cooperation |
| SONATAM | Societe Malienne de Tabac.( Malian Society of Tabacco). |
| The JCET | Joint Combined Exchange Training |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN HCR | The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees NDP :United Nations Development Program |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children Education Fund |
| UPDP | Union of People's Democratic Party. Name of the single party in Mali during military regime. (UDPM in French). |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WB | World Bank |
| WFP | The World Food Program |
| WFP | World Food Program |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

<u>Republic of Mali background and Touareg society orientation</u>

The Republic of Mali serves as a role model for many western sub-Saharan African countries. However, like many of its neighbors, Mali has been confronted with near-continuous internal security instability. Undermined by a fragile economic situation, the Malian people are currently experiencing particularly distinct insurgency activities in its three remote northern regions. Perpetrated by the Touareg people, one of the indigenous Malian ethnic groups, this insurgency continues to operate in Niger and Mauritania, along the Sahara valley. Given its third-world economic status, the Republic of Mali is short on the necessary resources required to face the development imperatives which appear to be incontrovertible for its population. Taking opportunity of the development weakness of the country, the Touareg people took up arms and try to compromise the integrity of the Malian territory. For decades the country has been seeking the solution to definitely contain the insurgency and establish a safe environment in the northern Mali. Bringing the reader to better understanding of the issue, the introductive chapter on "A Third-world country facing an indigenous insurgency: The Malian Insurgency," will first provide an historical understanding of the country then, will present the physical and social aspect of Mali and will end with a broad background of the insurgency.

<u>The Empire Era</u>

The Republic of Mali is the historical heir to three famous empires which chronologically succeeded one another from the 9th century into the colonization era, these are the Empire of Ghana, the Empire of Mali and the Songhai Empire.[1] Its history as a radiant civilization cradle has indelibly marked this country's heritage.

Mali's original imperial path harkens back to the empire of Ghana. This Ghanan Empire traces its heritage to Dinga Khore,[2] who is a direct descendant of the first black Egyptian pharaohs. At its apogee in the 10th century, the Ghanan Empire extended from the Nigerian Atlantic Ocean coast southward to the North of Cote d'Ivoire and westward through the Sahara desert (occupied since that time by the Touareg). Figure 1 depicts the expanse of the Empire of Ghana overlaid on Africa's modern borders.

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[1]Josef Gugler and William G. Flanagan, *Urbanization and Social change in West Africa* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 7.

[2]John William Johnson, Thomas A. Hale, and Stephen Belcher, *Oral Epics from Africa* (Indianapolis, IN: Library of Congress, 1997), 4.

Figure 1.      The Empire of Ghana 1400 AD
*Source:* Google Images, "The Empire of Ghana," http://www.google.com/
imgres?imgurl=http://plzucchi.stu.cofc.edu/MapWAEmpires.gif&imgrefurl=http://plzucc
hi.stu.cofc.edu/History%2520page%25202.html&h=356&w=315&sz=32&tbnid=9SSnE
NtKBEqMNM:&tbnh=90&tbnw=80&prev=/search%3Fq%3DThe%2BEmpire%2Bof%2
BGhana%26tbm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=The+Empire+of+Ghana&docid=lo
hCbyBtlRpgkM&sa=X&ei=tt_eTp3jFeHu0gH005CzBw&ved=0CFsQ9QEwBw&dur=43
06 (accessed 6 December 2011).

Economic activities dominated the day-to-day life of the nascent Ghanan Empire.

Subsistence farming, livestock rearing, and gold, salt, and slave trading overland through

the Sahara with the occupants of the northern Africa were prime income sources. These

same activities remained the economic priorities in Africa's Sahara regions until Mali

achieved its independence.

During the (early 11th century the Ghanan empire was conquered by the Kingdom

of Sosso[3] and replaced by the Empire of Mali. The empire of Mali from which, the

republic of Mali got its name, was bounded by the Niger River to the East, the Atlantic

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[3]Gladys G. Buck and Josephine Buck Jones, *Early Africa* (St Louis, MO: Milliken
Publishing Co., 2004), 18.

3

Ocean to the West, the Guinean forest to the South, with Mauritania to the North. Figure

2 depicts the expanse of the Empire of Mali overlaid on Africa's modern borders.

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Figure 2.        Empire of Mali
*Source:* Google images, "The Empire of Mali," http://www.google.com/
imgres?q=empire+of+Mali&hl=en&sa=X&rlz=1C1TSNJ_enUS457US457&biw=1366&
bih=667&tbm=isch&prmd=imvns&tbnid=UipxO87qafOFCM:&imgrefurl=http://www.a
ccessgambia.com/information/empire-mali.html&docid=nFj6zjy4c9Ao_M&imgurl
(accessed 6 December 2011).


Emperor Soundiata Keita was the "most legendary and famous Emperor in the

History of Mali" his rule was characterized by justice and anti-slavery initiatives.[4] During

his reign, many cities in the northern part of Mali were conquered between 1285 and

1300.[5] Among his conquests were the thriving middle-aged cities of Timbuktu and Gao,

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[4]Ross Velton, *Mali* (Guilford, CT : The Globe Peroquet Press Inc., 2000), 15.

[5]Ibid., 16, 17.

centers of African commerce.[6] Following his death in 1255, Kankan Moussa ascended to the throne as emperor in 1303.[7]

The emperor Kankan Moussa is widely seen as the Malian Empire's most successful ruler. For the most part, Moussa's initiatives were religiously inspired. During his era, "Islam had been established as court religion after years of contact with Muslim traders from the north." [8] Guiding his people into the Islamic fold, Moussa completed the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Capitalizing on the religious deference granted to him for doing so, he served to deepen the trade ties with the Islamic cities of North Mali: Timbuktu, Gao and Djenne.[9]

The northern cities were not the only benefactors of Moussa's expansion. His trade caravans facilitated cultural exchanges among the northern Muslim believers and the southern Animist populations. By expanding his empire's influence, Kankan Moussa strengthens its social ties and evolved his population's sense of organization. However, Moussa's regime ended abruptly in the 14th century due to multiple internal revolts which broke out in the far from the Malinke heartland due to the weak rulers encouraged power struggles.[10] These revolts would serve to weaken his leadership and cause the Malian Empire to collapse in the late 14th Century.

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., 16.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Velton, 16.

[10]Ibid., 16.

Moussa's Malian Empire was replaced by the Songhai Empire in 1465.[11] Figure 3

depicts the expanse of the Songhai Empire overlaid on Africa's modern borders.

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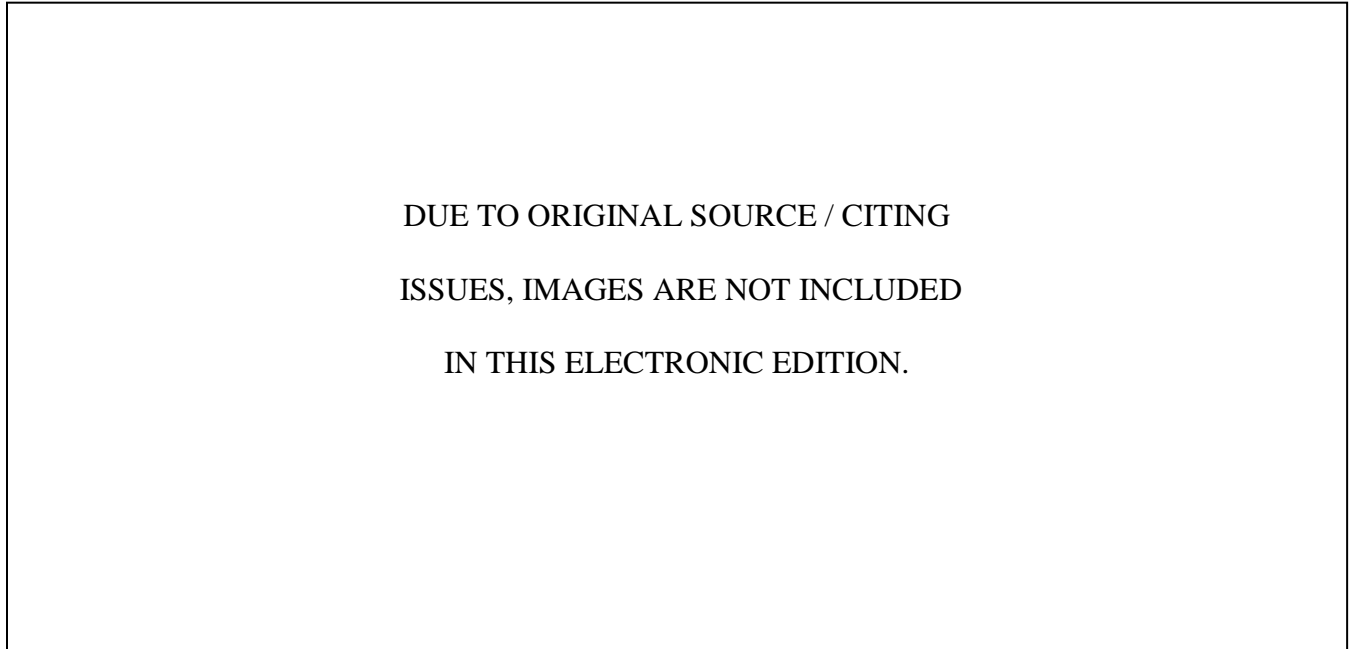
Figure 3.     The Songhai Empire circa 1400 AD
*Source*: Google images, "The Songhai Empire," http://www.google.com/
imgres?q=The+Songhai+Empire&hl=en&sa=X&rlz=1C1TSNJ_enUS457US457&biw=1
366&bih=667&tbm=isch&prmd=imvns&tbnid=d_tWnW1lyBiFGM:&imgrefurl=http://w
ww.zonu.com/detail-en/2010-01-05-11636/The-Songhai-Empire141528.html&docid=
4yPDhLA0g_YSZM&imgurl=http://www.zonu.com/images (accessed 6 December
2011).

Rising from the ashes of the Malian Empire, The Songhai Empire included most

of Malian Empire's territories and along with its indigenous insurgent movements. As

Velton (2000) points out, "the most rebellious part of the Mali Empire was in the

Sahelians and desert regions."[12] Ruthlessly led by the Songhai Emperor, Askia Daoud,[13]

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[11]Ibid., 17.

[12]Velton, 16.

the Songhai Empire dominated the trade routes from the Sahara to the Atlantic Ocean. A thriving commerce center, the Songhai also served as a nexus for the expansion of the Islamic religion across northern Africa. It was during the time of the Songhai that the city of Timbuktu achieved its renown as empire's Islamic capital. In 1529, Askia Daoud assumed governance over an empire that stretched from the Senegal River in the west to Niger and Nigeria in the East.[14] After the death of Daoud in 1583, the Songhai Empire came to an abrupt end due to the internal rivalries.[15]

The collapse of the Songhai Empire was sparked by the attempted of incursion of the Moroccans in the early 16th century. Multiple battles opposed the Songhai warriors to the Moroccan invaders whose main goal was the occupation of the Sahara regions.[16] After two years of fighting, Songhai was finished as a power and the torch was passed to the Moroccans who now controlled Timbuktu and Djene. As a resultant of the Moroccan anarchic leadership, the Touareg people got more influence in the region and many small kingdoms arose among them the Bambara and Peulh kingdoms. However, Touareg continue their intent of domination and in 1737, they chased the Moroccans from Timbuctou, and expanded their domination over the region until the victory of the Peulh in 1883.[17]

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[13]Velton, 16. Name of the Emperor who took over the Songhai Empire and changed the denomination the Askia Empire.

[14]Velton, 16.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 17.

[17]Ibid., 13-14.

That set the stage for Toucouleur leadership in the region. This regime faced the winds of the colonial expansion in the 19th century.[18]

## The Colonial Era and Independence

Two centuries after the empire era, the Republic of Mali underwent French colonization, finally capitulating following repeated attempts at resistance. Called "Soudan francais" (The French Sudan) during the colonization period, the first French colony was settled in 1891 with the present Malian capital city of Bamako serving as the colonial seat-of-government.[19] Different kings and tribal leaders were vigorously opposed to the national submission associated with colonialism.

The French employed a "divide-and conquer" strategy during the colonization period.[20] In order to facilitate ruling Mali, the French colonizers achieved their desired future state with the complicity of the Touareg people, who had been the first[21] among the communities to submit to French dominion. The colonization period of Malian history lasted more than 7 decades, from 1890 to 1960, year of the Mali's independence as was marked by the French domination, rule and governance over the Malian indigene authorities.[22]

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[18]Ibid., 18.

[19]Presidence La Republique Du Mali [Presidency of the Republic of Mali], "Geographie du Mali" [Geography of Mali], www.koulouba.pr.ml/spip.php?article9 (accessed 8 May 2011).

[20]Velton, 19.

[21]Ibid., 20.

[22]Ibid.

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During the early years of the Malian independence, the development gap was pronounced. The indigenous leaders of this newly created third- world country faced not only economic challenges, but had to establish control over and organize their young country. At the time of independence from France, Mali's GDP was less than 3 percent.[23] Led by Mali's first president, Mobibo Keita, who had been elected by his peers based on his political predominance and his leadership during the colonial period,[24] the new government adopted a socialist approach, seeking to strengthen links with the former USSR and China.[25] The government's main focus was to create an alimentary self-sufficiency by encouraging mass "popular agriculture" across the country.[26] Mali's first representative government established basic infrastructure, and established political parties as a means of initiating self-governance. It was during Mali's first government that the Touareg population became disaffected due to what they believed was unequal development concentrated in the south, skewed to favor the black southern population . The initial Malian government spent just eight years at the country's helm before being overthrown by a military coup in 1968.[27] Unfortunately, many aspects of Mali society

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[23]Brunet Jailly, *Health Financing in the Poor Countries* (Washington, DC: World Bank Publication, 1991), 4.

[24]Velton, 22.

[25]Ibid., 23.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

took a step back during the decade of the 1960s, leaving many developmental challenges untouched, such as education and health care.[28]

Led by General Moussa Traore, Mali's new military government continued on the same cooperative path with the Eastern bloc as had its predecessor. Akin to its Soviet and East European counterparts, the military regime retained control via a single political party, the UPDP.[29] For two decades as a military state dominated by the UPDP, the republic of Mali struggled developmentally while the military regime's efforts to launch new economic initiatives were often undone by draught,[30] and instabilities in the Sahara regions. Not surprisingly, the Touareg population seized on the country's domestic and economic hardships to further the idea of being discriminated against, neglected and marginalized by the regime. Additionally multiple internal crises were fomented by the society's civil movements and student associations. Due to these internal clashes, the military regime was brought o its knees and forced to step down, setting a stage for a democratic system to take root in Mali.

Democratic since 1992, the Republic of Mali still lacks the economic stability necessary to meet its population's basic requirements.[31] However, the country is ruled by an increasingly diversified political landscape, which includes many assorted political movements and parties. The Democratic government has initiated many reforms to

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[28]Ibid., 24.

[29]UPDP: Union of People's Democratic Party. Name of the single party in Mali during military regime. (UDPM in French).

[30]Pierre M Johnson, Karel Mayraud, and Marc Parquin, *Governing Global Desertification* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 4.

[31]Velton, 25.

privatize and liberalize the economy to reduce the macroeconomic imbalance caused by the centralized Socialist system. Today, Mali's major economic sectors remain agriculture (which accounts 45 percent for the country's GDP),[32] livestock rearing and fishing. These three activities they occupy daily livelihood of 80 percent of the population.

## Geography and Society

The Republic of Mali is a landlocked country in the heart of the western Africa. It covers a surface area of 1.240.192 square kilometer, equivalent of twice the size of Texas, and is bordered by Algeria to the North, Mauritania and Senegal to the west, to the east by Niger, and to the South by Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso.[33] The country is composed of eight administrative regions similar to US states, of which three are located in the northern part. Interestingly enough, these three northern regions are more than double the size of the five southern districts. It is in the three northern regions where ongoing Tourareg insurgency is underway.

The population of the country is estimated at approximately 12 million people with a population density of one person per every 7.4 Km.[34] Both numbers are significantly impacted by Mali's large size and the nomadic lifestyles of the Saharan peoples. The three northern regions hold three significant population centers. As of 2010,

[32]Ibid., 27.

[33]Ibid., 4.

[34]Presidence La Republique Du Mali.

there were 25, 000 people in Kidal,[35] 32,000[36] in Timbuktu, and another 8,000 in the city of Gao.[37] The obvious conclusion one could draw from these statistics is that more than 90 percent of the Malian population lives in the south and are dark skinned, whereas the northern population is mainly light skinned (Touareg).[38]

Mali teems with at least a dozen distinct ethnic groups of which the Bambara and Malinke comprise the majority. The country's official language is French. However, more than 30 local dialects and languages are routinely spoken.[39] Mali's predominant religion is Islam, with approximately 93 percent of the population practicing Sunni or Shi'a.[40] About 6 percent of the population is Animist, and another full 1 percent is Christian. Religious strife, with the exception of the Islamic fascists of the Tourareg population, is almost non-existent.[41]

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[35]Ambroise Dakouo, De la gestion traditionnelle d'un conflit relative a un meurte dans la ville de Kidal [From the traditional handling of a conflict related to kidal], *Governance in Africa*, http://base.afrique-gouvernance.net/fr/corpus_dph/fiche-dph-1382.html (accessed 4 May 2011).

[36]Matt Rosenberg, "Timbuktu," About.com, http://geography.about.com/cs/worldfacts/a/timbuktu.htm (accessed 4 May 2011).

[37]Mongabay.com, "Population of Gao, Mali," http://population.mongabay.com/population/mali/2457163/gao (accessed 4 May 2011).

[38]Velton, 30.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

Standing apart from the rest of Mali's common population are the Touareg people, who for centuries have occupied Mali's northern regions in and near the Sahara. The Touaregs are one of a number of the pastoral desert peoples occupying the southern portions of North Africa. They are significant in number in Mali, Mauritania, Libya, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad.[42] Many sources track their origins in the Mediterranean region. Touareg livelihoods are generally based on a pastoral livestock herding caravansary economy, mostly oriented toward Algeria vice the interior of Mali.

Nowadays many Touareg people are well-educated and occupy high raking political and administrative positions in Mali. The total number of Touaregs in Mali is estimated to be 500,000 to 650,000 people living in the Sahara regions,[43] they represent 1/10 of the country's general population. Touaregs are devoutly Muslim, having been converted to Islam between the 7th and 11th centuries by the Moroccan Almoravides who arrived in the region to expand Islam to inner Africa.[44]

Touareg's speak more than ten clannish languages. Although the Touareg society was one of the first to combat French colonization efforts, it also enjoys the distinction as the being the first to submit to French rule. For decades, the Touareg's have negatively impacted Mali's security and stability by organizing recurrent insurgency in the northern regions of Mali. Figure 4 Shows the Touareg areas overlaid on a map of Mali.

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[42]Edmon Bernus *Etre toureg au Mali* (Austrom: Champaud Jacques, 1992).

[43]http://www.earth-cultures.co.uk/destinations/mali/touareg-and-dogon-of-mali (accessed 5 May 2011).

[44]Gwyn Campbel, *African Diaspora in Asia* (New York: Springer Science Business Media Inc., 2005), 308.

Figure 4.       The Republic of Mali and the Touareg Populations
*Source:* Google Images, The Republic of Mali and the Touareg Populations,
http://www.google.com/imgres?q=cartes+des+trois+regions+au+nord+du+Mali&hl=en&
rlz=1C1TSNJ_enUS457US457&biw=1366&bih=667&tbm=isch&tbnid=-
9_0hwl3TiZJCM:&imgrefurl (accessed 6 December 2011).

The Republic of Mali is part of the fifteen countries member of the African

financial community (AFC).[45] The fifteen countries of the AFC are among the poorest

countries in the world. In 2005, the poverty rate in Mali was 59.2 percent. Although this

number is alarming, the good news lies in the decreased poverty rate of 47.5 percent in

2006.[46] Noticeable progress has been due to the continuous support of the Bretton Woods

established institutions. Also, reforms and investments instituted over the past two

decades of democratic governance have begun to bear fruit and enhance Mali's

development. In 2006, when Mali was receiving Millennium Challenge Corporate aid,

the country's average income was estimated at $460 per person. The Millennium

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[45]Currency used in Africa and guaranteed by the national treasury of the French Republic.

[46]International Monetary Fund, IFM Country Report No. 08/121, "Mali: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, April, 2008, www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/ 2008/cr08121.pdf (accessed 3 June, 2011), 85.

Challenge monies, supplied at the behest of the United Sates and her allies, were intended to assist the development projects in agriculture, transport and education.[47] By any economic metric, it becomes readily obvious that the Republic of Mali is struggling to satisfy the basic needs the Malian citizens have long dreamed of. Unfortunately, Mali is a country with limited sources of income which are insufficient to cover its developmental expenses unless it receives support from outside institutions or third countries. As a result, most social sectors like education, employment, and health remain a pressing necessity. Employment is also matter of serious concern in Mali, with an unemployment rate of 42 percent in 2004.[48] Given the stark aforementioned economic realities, it is not surprising to learn that Mali's totality of national power (Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy) has been leveraged to eradicate a recurrent Touareg insurgency.

<center>The Touareg Insurgency</center>

Touaregs are widely considered unpatriotic, perpetrators of violence, and promoters of instability by the average Malian citizen. These stereotypes have been reinforced by the actions of Mali's Touareg insurgency. For decades, the Touareg people have expressed and demonstrated a recurrent desire to create their own country in the northern part of Mali. To achieve this goal, armed militants groups have fought to defend this secessionist ideology.

Following Mali's national independence in 1960, achieving economic stability was the first challenge faced by the country's new leaders. Due to the country's financial

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[47]United States Government Accountability Office, *The Millennium Challenge Corporation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, September 2006).

[48]International Monetary Fund, 38.

weakness, the Touareg people presumed themselves to be targets of discrimination. Feeling as though they were being neglected in the country's benefits distribution, the Touareg people believed the country's wealth was being preserved for the southern regions, which is only populated by blacks.

Two years later, in 1962, the Touaregs initiated an insurgency characterized by small hit-and-run operations against government targets (facilities, convoys, etc). Although an escalation of violence was noticed in northern Mali, the Touareg people lacked a coordinated orienting strategy.[49] During this initial period, the insurgents lacked popular Touareg support. Considered a rag-tag group of bandits, the Touareg people used camels as their primary means of transportation and were armed with rather old and unsophisticated Soviet –bloc weapons.

Following some limited attacks in 1963, the Malian government finally decided to meet the Touareg threat with force.[50] Equipped with Russian weapons, the newly formed Malian army conducted vigorous counterinsurgency operations to eradicate the emerging insurgency. By the end of 1964, the insurgency was suppressed and the Touareg people were placed under a repressive military administration.[51] The Malian Government's violence and success in dealing with the emergent insurgency effectively separated the individual Touareg people from the insurgents. However, the government maintained control of the country's northern part while doing little to improve the Touareg life style

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[49]Kalifa Keita, LTC, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali" (Report, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA, 1998), 10.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., 11.

in relation to the south. As a result, the grievance level among the Touareg population remained high. It was obvious to even the casual observer that the instability in the north had just been deferred, not resolved.

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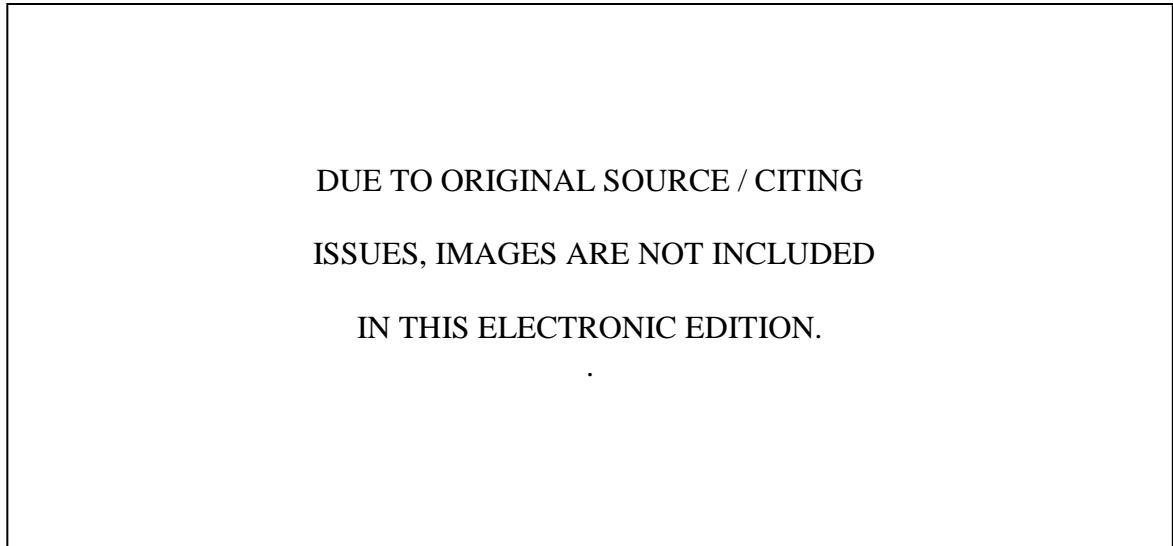
Figure 5.      Toureg Area in Africa
*Source:* Google Images, Touareg Area in Africa, http://www.google.com/ imgres?q=Map+of+the+touareg+area+in+africa&hl=en&rlz=1C1TSNJ_enUS457US457 &biw=1366&bih=667&tbm=isch&tbnid=BdYA9xC1Z5tzDM:&imgrefurl (accessed 6 December 2011).

Over the course of the next three decades (1960-1990), the Touareg built a strong and well-organized ideological strategy and accompanying combat force with which to confront the Malian army in what is now commonly referred to as "The Rebellion."[52] Throughout the 30-year period of calm, the Touaregs had tirelessly worked to maintain a strong animosity toward the Malian government. Resultantly, the Touareg rebellion was

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[52]Keita, 12.

launched in June 1990.[53] Unlike the initial insurgency of the early 1960s, in this rebellion

the Malian army would be faced has faced well trained insurgent combatants with a high

level of combat experience.[54] According to some sources, the Touareg rebels were

receiving external support. Unlike the first conflict, four principal Touareg rebel groups

banded together to conduct the attacks and these groups inflicted a significant number of

casualties and took a large number of soldiers prisoners. Furthermore, they caused the

death of many government workers, particularly "originals" from the south.[55] On both the

Malian army and Touareg rebel sides, heavy losses were significant.

Reconciliation talks were held in Algeria in 1991, which helped mediate the

conflict. The Algerian Accords called for a cease fire, an exchange of prisoners, and

allowed the integration of insurgent combatants into the Malian regular forces. These

conditions essentially deferred the insurgency for a decade. Had the Malian government

eradicated the insurgency in the early-1990s, the Islamic insurgency of 2002 would not

have happened. In the post-9/11 proliferation of Al-Qaida branches, the Malian Touareg

insurgency joined forces with the Algerian GSPC, known as the Salafist Group for

Preaching and Combat.[56] A significant number of the Malian army's integrated rebels

also deserted and joined the insurgents. This significantly compromised the national

army, due to the insurgent's knowledge of the country's confidentialities. The insurgents

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[53]Ibid., 14.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Keita, 15.

[56]Suzan E. Rice, Corinne Craff, and Carlos Pascal, *Confronting Poverty- Weak States and US National Security* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 9.

formed antigovernment guerilla groups, and operated throughout northern Mali, Algeria, Niger and Mauritania. Externally funded, these groups were well equipped and their capabilities allowed them to go toe-to-toe with regular Malian army light Infantry units. Possessing anti-armor weapons, multiple rocket launchers, and anti-aviation guns the insurgents attacked military bases in the north, kidnapped civilians, and ambushed military convoys. In 2008, the Touareg insurgency aligned itself with Al-Qaida of the Islamic Maghreb. Reinforced by Islamist terrorists from Algeria, the Malian army found itself facing experienced, well-finance, and well-trained enemy combatants. The insurgents improved their tactics by using IEDs to restrict movement and began mining large portions of the terrain. These new tactics easily outstripped the Malian army's capabilities to deal effectively with them.[57]

To date, this threat to the Malian sovereignty remains unchecked. Currently, there is neither the possibility of a peace agreement nor surrender. The insurgents are organized in diverse groups dispersed across the desert and neighboring countries. As a result, insurgents operate with impunity in the Sahara and continue to employ mobile forces in the northern regions. Tourist kidnappings, regular Army POW (prisoner of war) captures, and hostages taking remain common occurrences.[58] The central question remains whether or not the republic of Mali can find a solution to this recurrent insurgency while promoting internal development activities?

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[57]Ibid.

[58]Richard Miniter, *Shadow War. The Untold Story of how America is Winning the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2004), 92.

## Conclusion

The Republic of Mali is the historical successor to a rich and steeped heritage established by preceding empires. From its independence up to now, more than five decades have past. In this half-century, the country has faced a recurrent Touareg insurgency in its northern regions. Starting with low-level attacks and evolving into a professional rebel force before assimilating into the al-Qaida's Saharan surrogates, the Touaregs have repulsed the different government's attempts to maintain the integrity of the Malian territory and its sovereignty. Despite repeated attempts to subdue the Touaregs, no effective, definitive, or long-lasting solution has yet been found. Adding to the instability caused by the insurgency, the Malian government remains challenged with developmental difficulties.

After a sincere view of the ongoing security situation in the northern Mali, it remains clear that as more time passes the insurgents get better organized. Meanwhile, the country focuses on the challenges of growing its economic capacity and other governmental sectors while searching for any and all external support. Resultantly, Mali is at a crossroads and faces the dilemma whether to develop the country or lose its sovereignty. In the end, both must be accomplished. To this end, the next chapter will recount in detail the different phases of the Touareg insurgency.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The United States Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, describes an insurgency as "an organized protracted politico-military struggle designated to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control" Chap 1-1. Drawing on a definition of an insurgency from the World Bank (WB), Diap (2009), in his work *Counterinsurgency in West Africa, Lethal and non-Lethal activities* defines an insurgency as "a protracted political military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country though the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organization."[59]

These two definitions share many similarities to the ongoing Touareg insurgency in Mali, but do not entirely describe it. It is these nuances which make the Touareg insurgency distinct. This chapter will provide the different phases of the Touareg insurgency, its recurrent nature, and the metamorphosis of the insurgency group into Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.

The First Touareg Insurgency: The Opening Salvo

Like other African peoples, the Touareg were affected by the winds of change blowing through Africa in the 1950s, and were motivated to imagine a post-colonial dispensation. Many Touareg in Mali (and neighboring countries) had begun to dream of an independent state. Azawad comprised of Touareg-populated territory in northern Mali, northern Niger, and southern Algeria.

[59]Diop Yakhya, "Counterinsurgency in West Africa, non-Lethal Activities" (Master's Thesis, Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2009), 36.

However, Touareg primary loyalties were directed to their local communities. Touaregs as a group had never demonstrated a unified political (or military) agenda.[60]

The Malian Touareg insurgency started just after the country's independence in 1962. The Touareg people had just emerged from French domination and the taxes imposed during colonization. Unable to gain their autonomy from the French prior to independence, the Touaregs engaged in dissident activities designed to stave off Malian governance and create their own country. In hindsight, the Touareg dissidence was caused by a perceived lack of inclusion and consideration by the new Malian administration. Admittedly, the new Malian government lacked the experience and means necessary to satisfy the high developmental expectations of the entire population, not just the Touaregs.

Furthermore, the Touaregs had generated significant antipathy in the southern leaders through their practice of a dark-skinned people slave trade in the Sahara. Finally, the Touareg are widely viewed by the southern people as epitome of laziness, chauvinism and opportunism.[61] For their part, Robin E. Poulton and Ibrahim ag Youssouf provide their own explanation for the Touareg insurgency. In their paper *Peacemaking by Consensus in Mali*,[62] the authors argue that the fundamental reasons for Touareg discontent resulted from government negligence of the northern regions caused by the concentration of developmental investment in the southern regions.

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[60]Keita, 9

[61]Ibid.

[62]Robin E. Poulton and Ibrahim ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu: Democratic Governance, Development and African Peacemaking* (New York: United Nations, 1998).

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Many sources hold Mali's first free government accountable for the first Touareg insurgency in the northern region. Tor A . Benjamese supports the assertion that Mali's initial government is to blame. In his work *Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel? The Case of the Touareg Rebellion in Northern Mali,* Benjamese *points* out that starting at independence "the nomadic way of life was considered backward, unproductive and undesirable. This led pastures in northern Mali to be labeled 'le Mali inutile' ('the useless Mali'). According to Ag Baye (1993), through frequent confiscations, humiliations and violence, the new Malian administration was even more hostile to the Touareg than the French administration had been.

Followed by a modernization policy launched from southern Mali which was perceived by the Touareg as a new form of colonization, these policies led to the marginalization of nomads. According to *Lecocq* (2004), the modernization policy combined with views of a backward north, was the main cause of the Touareg revolt which broke out in the Kidal area in 1963. Due to southern polices which inspired separatism and marginalization of the nomads, many Touareg did not develop a feeling of being Malian (Poulton & Ag Youssouf, 1998).[63] Strengthened by the grievances stemming from these diverse causes, the Touaregs launched low level attacks against government properties and infrastructure in the northern regions.

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[63]Tor A . Benjamese, *Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel? The Case of the Touareg Rebellion in Northern Mali* (Washington, DC: Norwegian University of Life Sciences, 2008), 828.

Figure 6.        Map of the region of Kidal
*Source:* Mali Kidal.png., http://www.google.com/imgres?q=Source:+Mali+ Kidal.png.&hl=en&sa=X&rlz=1C1TSNJ_enUS457US457&biw=1366&bih=667&tbm=i sch&prmd=imvns&tbnid=v7UUWjy-AFaWBM:&img (accessed 6 December 2011).

However, the insurgents were unable to mobilize the Touareg mass base to join the dissidents. The Touareg lacked an appropriate command and control structure, and primarily acted in small disparate cells. Furthermore, the Touareg guerillas were lightly equipped with only small arms and unable to achieve their strategic ends of a separate Touareg state. Resultantly, the only thing this initial Touareg insurgency achieved during its three years was the contribution to the country's deteriorating security condition.

For their part, the Mali government reciprocated Touareg attacks with strength. They immediately reacted by reinforcing their military forces in the three northern regions. Many have characterized the government counter-insurgency as a massacre of the Touareg people. In their paper entitled *Mali and Senegal,* Macartan Humphreys and Habaye ag Mohamed described the national authorities' reaction as "The repression of the rising by the Kieta régime included the sacking of the region of Kidal, the poisoning

of wells, and the killing of an estimated 1,000 members of the Touareg community, resulting in an exodus by nomad groups towards southern Algeria."[64]

The first Touareg rebellion concluded in 1964 and resulted in very heavy Touareg casualties and the subsequent exile of much of the Touareg young population to neighboring countries (Mauritania, Niger, Algeria, Libya, and Morocco).[65] Seizing on their victory, the government sought to unilaterally forge a long-standing peace by instituting martial law in the northern regions. Following the mass Touareg exodus, the remaining population was seriously oppressed by the government's appointed military rulers. It was due to the government's heavy-handed polices toward the Touaregs that those who had to this point remained neutral openly began to side with the rebels.

By 1962, the Republic of Mali has not yet ratified the Breton Woods accords and could count on little external aid. Despite becoming an IMF member in September 1963,[66] the country survived primarily on funds raised from national tax collection and limited external support from France and the Soviet Union. The primary purpose of what little internal wealth Mali possessed was initially planned to support agricultural production and food self-sufficiency. However, exerting military control over the northern regions served to divert developmental resources from their intended purpose. Little prior planning by the Malian government resulted in austerity measures elsewhere,

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[64]Macartan Humphreys and Habaye ag Mohamed, *Mali and Senegal,* January 2003, http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/sen_mali.pdf (accessed 4 May 2011), 5.

[65]Keita, 13.

[66]IMF Approves Loan of US$ 14, 4 under PRGF Arrangement for Mali Press Release No. 01/34 (2001).

as the new military and administrative facilities across the northern region were established without full consideration of the means required to sustain the personnel.

By the end of 1964, the repressive Malian government response and imposition of strict military control over the three northern regions effectively muzzled the Touaregs and served to deter further dissident activity.[67] The government of Modibo Keita had regained full control of the Sahara regions, many Touregs have been exiled, and northern Mali was considered safe. This experience served to establish the "muscled" approach as the government's modus operandi from for handling the emerging insurgency.

However, contrary to the perceptions of the national government, the reality on the ground was actually very different. The means employed to "de-fang" the first insurgency established the antecedents of the second insurgency, as the Touareg anger would serve to re-kindle the insurgency decades later as an act of revenge.

<u>The Second Touareg Insurgency: Open Rebellion</u>

From 1964 through 1990, northern Mali went through many metamorphosis and transformations.[68] At the national level, rank-and-file Malians supported a national leadership change in 1968 marked by the rise of a military junta led by Moussa Traore, who was a Lieutenant at the time.[69] Traore and the junta would guide Mali for more the better part of a quarter century (23+ years).

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[67]Keita, 10.

[68]Velton, 28.

[69]Ibid., 23.

At the time of the junta's installation, northern Mali remained under complete military control, governance, and administration. Those Touaregs who did not emigrate during hostilities set about reconstructing their lives and recovering from the damages caused to their livestock and tribal structures during the government's repressive crackdown.

An absence of internal strife from 1970 to 1990 put the Malian economy on a significant growth path.[70] The country discovered new agro-pastoral revenue mechanisms to help fructify its economy. Furthermore, Malis' second government attempted to implement industrialization of its backward economy, specifically focusing on the mining industry to increase the country's wealth. In their book *Linking Levels of Analysis*, Dolores Koenig, Moussa Sow and Tiema Diarra, state that " The government recently has begun to earn significant foreign exchange from gold exports, which contributed 20.6% of export value in 1988."[71] Moreover, the government installed some few low- scale industries such as a tobacco factory (SONATAM),[72] a soap and edible oil production facility (HUICOMA),[73] and cotton products manufacturing plant (CMDT).[74] These efforts serve as testimonials to the junta's commitment to a new élan of development.

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[70]Dolores Koenig, Tieman Diarra, and Moussa Sow, *Innovation and Individuality in African Development. Changing production strategies in Mali* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 3.

[71]Koenig, Diarra, and Sow, 3.

[72]SONATAM: Societe Malienne de Tabac (*Malian Society of Tabacco*).

[73]HUICOMA: Huilerie Cotoniere du Mali (*Cotton oil mill of Mali*).

[74]CMDT: Compagnie Malienne pour le development du Textile (Malian textile Development Company).

While national efforts were focused on facilitating development to uplift the population's living conditions northern Mali was laid to waste by a horrific -year drought. The drought left thousands of death among the Touareg population, many displaced or impoverished. Coel Kirby and Christina Murray described the drought thusly

> Drought hit the Malian Sahara in 1983-1985 and again the Touareg faced southern migrations and poor reception. After the drought, they moved north and organized with Touareg groups in Algeria and Niger to defend themselves against perceived and real persecution. The Malian Touareg became increasingly politicized during this traumatic time and began to forge an exclusive Touareg identity.[75]

Different sources have attributed the second Touareg insurgency to diverse factors. Some attribute the root cause to the indefatigable revenge desires stemming from Malian retaliations during the first insurgency. Others point to the Touareg's unfulfilled yearning for autonomy spurred by prejudice in the national government's wealth distribution policies. According to Rheal Drisdelle,[76] there are many other causes in addition to those previously cited. Drisdelle highlights the Touareg initiative to defend all the Malian rural populations they thought considered economically estranged from the central government. Drisdelle also pointed the Touareg decision to end the slave trade of poor black-skinned people in the three northern regions by rich and powerful Touaregs. That factor did not directly motivate the insurgency, even if it did, can be considered as a very secondary cause of it.

Mali's second insurgency started in June 1990 when an armed Touareg group stormed government offices in the north-eastern city of Menaka, which lies near the

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[75]Coel Kirkby and Christina Murray, *Asymmetric Autonomy and Settlement of Ethnic Conflicts* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 106.

[76]Drisdelle, 32.

border region between Mali and Niger. Drisdelle points out that these Touareg combatants, who immigrated in Libya, Mauritania, and Niger, held aspirations of turning the Northern regions into an independent Touareg country.

Equipped with crew served weaponry by Libyan dictator Colonel Momwar Qaddafi, many of these second phase insurgents were descendents of the Touareg exiled after being defeated in 1963.[77] Many of those who had previously fled to Libya had fought alongside Qaddafi's forces as mercenaries against Morocco.[78] In *Conflict and Conflict Resolution* Keita qualifies the second insurgency as a "rebellion" by saying that, unlike the first uprising, the insurgents were well structured and carried out decisive operations against government troops and infrastructure in the region.[79]

Moreover, Keita indicates that unlike their predecessors, this generation of Touareg rebels were armed with light vehicles. Four rebel groups formed the backbone of the Touareg force: The Islamic Arab Front of Azawad (FIAA), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad (FPLA), the National Front for Liberation of Azawad (FNLA), and the Autonomous Base of the United Front for Liberation of Azawad (FULA).[80]

Complicating matters, the Touareg insurgents were joined by other disenchanted ethnic groups like the Bedouins, Maurs, and Bellahs.[81] Facing a well-equipped force with

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[77]Keita, 13.

[78]Drisdelle, 32.

[79]Keita, 13.

[80]Ibid., 14.

[81]Ibid.,15.

battle-hardened and religiously motivated insurgents backed by Libya, the Malian government reacted in a dissimilar fashion similar from the first insurgency.

Unlike the first insurgency in the 1962s, this time the government embraced a policy of limited warfare in containing the rebellion.[82] Two primary factors served to limit the government's options. First, there was growing domestic opposition in the main southern cities due to a widespread belief that the Touareg insurgency was a permanent part of the Malian landscape. Furthermore, many believed the economic conditions were untenable to support a long conflict.

As a result, the government of Mali sought a peace agreement with the rebels which was reached January 1991.[83] Named the *Accords of Tamanarasset* after the Algerian city where the peace talks were held, the Accords seceded points which furthered Touareg autonomy.

The agreement's most critical points dealt with the Malian Army, on which size and operational limits in the three northern regions were placed. The integration of the insurgents into the Malian Army was also a provision which would serve to undermine the integrity of Mali's armed forces in future conflicts. Finally, a guaranteed fixed proportion of Mali's national infra-structural investment funding would be devoted to the northern regions.[84] Robin E. Poulton and Ibrahimag Youssouf emphasize the undermining effect these agreements had on the Mali government, pointing out

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[82]Ibid., 16.

[83]Ibid.

[84]Hsain Ilahiane, *Historical Dictionary of the Berber* (Oxford, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2006), 119.

encouraging effect these financial implications would have on the Junta's "silent

partners."[85]

In characterizing the Junta's downfall following Mali's 'civil war," Poulton and

Youssouf highlight the failed demobilization and reintegration of the insurgents into

mainstream Malian society, as called for as part of the *Accords of Tamanarasset*. The

demobilization and reintegration program called for the disarmament and cantonment of

the insurgents. Each program participant was paid to be paid a $200 stipend, provided

with free food , given re-training, supplied a uniform, and given a regular salary for the

cantonment's duration. *Poulton and Youssouf* estimate approximately 2000 ex-

combatants were integrated into the national police, army, or civil administration between

November 1995 and January 1996. Another 9000 Touareg's benefited from the civil

integration program and approximately 3000 weapons were collected.

Three months after the peace negotiations were concluded and the Accords of

Tamanarasset were signed, a military coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Amadou Toumani

Toure put an end to General Traore's regime. In 1992, Toure organized free (and fair)

elections and handed over power to President Alpha Konare.[86] In doing so, Mali ushered

in a second democracy.

Conversely, northern Mali was living through a period of precarious peace.

According to Drisdelle, it did not take long for this precarious peace to fail. Three major

reasons are cited. First, the Touareg rebel leaders were unable to control their elements

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[85]Henny van der Graaf and Robin E. Poulton, "The Weapon Heritage of Mali," in *Weapons Collection and Disposal as an Element of Post-Settlement Peacebuilding* (Bonn International Centre for Conversion, 1998); Poulton and Youssouf.

[86]Velton, 26.

who, despite the peace agreement's amnesty program, still possessed their individual weapons. These armed rebels routinely practiced banditry in the surrounding localities of Gao. [87] Second, the reaction of the Goa's population to the increased lawlessness led to the creation of a security militia (The Gandha Coi, a Songhai movement) to counter the Touareg bandit's aggression.[88] Finally, as part of the demobilization and cantonment, the Malian government instituted a multi-layered, bloated, and corrupt bureaucracy to implement the peace accords and repatriate the Touareg people in neighboring countries.[89] These three factors weighed heavily on the tenuous peace in the northern regions. The only thing standing between peace and war was an igniting event.

This igniting event manifested itself in a period of deadly atrocities from 1992 to 1996 as President Konare solicited help from France, Mauritania, and Libya to bring rebels at the table of negotiation and conclude a lasting peace. Termed the *National Pact*, the peace talks culminated in March 1996 with a ceremony at which the assembled insurgency leaders, Malian Governmental leaders, and other internal and external stakeholders gathered to burn 3000 weapons.[90] The ceremony was dubbed the "The Flame of Peace." However, questions persist down to today on whether or not it actually was a "Flame of Peace."

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[87]Gao: One of the northern regions. Mainly populated by Sonrhai, Touareg and Arabs.

[88]Keita, 20.

[89]Denis Garcia, *Small Arms and Security, New Emerging International Norms* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 77.

[90]Drisdelle, 35, 36.

The Flame of Peace: Aftermath

After the successful negotiations achieved the "Flame of Peace" and the insurgents agreed to end of hostilities, there was new sense of hope that a safe and secure northern Mali could be achieved. The government made the development of the three northern regions a top priority, bringing them to the same level of development as the southern regions. With the support of the International Community and the US Agency for International Development many initiatives were launched to improve the standard of living in Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal.

Sperl highlights activities of the WFP (the World Food Program) in charge of supporting the population food needs; the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) bringing population integration programs; and the HCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) which mission was to take arrange the safe return of the dislocated population. These organizations were permanently present in the northern regions and trace the basic infrastructure rehabilitation and food security efforts of these developmental organizations.[91] A significant number of labor-intensive projects, including the construction of schools, health facilities, communal buildings, well-drilling, and improved irrigation and cultivation of Niger River delta arable land were among the many initiatives. Education was also made a priority, as increased school construction

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[91]Stefan Sperl, "International refugee aid and social change in northern Mali," Workpaper No 22 (School of Oriental and African Studies University of London United Kingdom, 1998), http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/pubs/pubon.htm (accessed 2 April 2011).

and educational opportunity advancement for women were part of the $25 million

developmental injection in the three northern regions.[92]

The Malian government developmental push included targeted efforts in the

northern regions by restructuring the tourism department in an attempt to open the three

northern regions to tourism. The three northern regions in Mali hold various religious and

cultural tourist destinations, many of which are well visited westerners. As a result, the

Mali Economy Profile 2011 attributes an annual growth rate of 5 percent due to increased

tourism and an adherence to the proposed IMF economic reform.

With an improved security situation coupled with developmental momentum, the

northern regions were beginning to emerge from decades of abject impoverishment.

However, in 2006, fighting broke out in the three northern regions. Initiated by some

Touareg deserters after their incorporation in the Malian army, the rebels attacked

government installations and army camps in Timbuktu and Kidal. Led by Ibrahim ag

Bahaga and Fagaga, both of whom were part of the Accords of Tamanarasset

reintegration efforts all from the integration reached after the Accords of the National

pact mentioned earlier.

Following a strong military response and Libyan mediations, a cease-fire was

concluded between insurgents and the Malian government.[93] However, a larger threat

was looming on the horizon. A brake away branch of the Algerian Armed Islamic Group,

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[92]International Fund for Agricultural Development, "Enabling the rural poor to overcome poverty in Mali," 2010, www.ifad.org/operations/projects/ regions/Pa/factsheets/mali_e.pdf (accessed 7 December 2011), 44.

[93]Joelle Burbank. *Trans-Saharan Trafficking: A Growing Source of Terrorist Financing* (Center for the Study of Threat Convergence Occasional Research Series Washington, DC: The Fund for Peace, 2010).

the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) had been operating unimpeded in the Malian Sahara for more than five years. Unlike the Touaregs, the GSPC cared little when it came to sparing civilians and innocents. Fleeing Algeria, the GSPC escaped to the Malian Sahara to train its followers. In 2007, the GSPC aligned itself with of Al-Qaida, bringing with it the Malian Touareg insurgents and leaders. By late 2007, the GSPC no longer existed. Renamed Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Malian insurgents joined the world-wide Islamic fascist movement.

## Alignment with Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

In order to understand the Malian Touareg insurgency's alignment with AQIM, a short background on AQIM is necessary in order to fully grasp the alignment of the two groups. AQIM's origins date back to 1992 the Algerian military prevented the rise of the Islamist political party to power. This military action resulted in the formation of the GIA (Armed Islamic Group, in French Groupe Islamique Armé) by Algerian Islamists. According to John Rollins, the GSPC split from the GIA over the targeting of civilians six years later.[94]

In 2003, GSPC leader Abelmalik Brouder declared his 2003 allegiance to Al-Qaida. By 2006, Brouder had announced a unity pact with Al-Qaida and changed the organization's name to reflect this alliance. Operating first in Algeria, AQIM raised funds through kidnapping, small arms trafficking in the Sahara, smuggling drugs, black-marketing cigarettes, and receiving external funding from other Al-Qaida cells in Europe

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[94]John Rollins, *Al-Qaida and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global presence and Implications for US policy* (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2010), 15, paragraph 1.

and the Middle East. Initially attacking the Malian government and security forces in Algeria, AQIM initiated a campaign of suicide bombing designed to establish an Islamic fundamentalist haven in the Sahara.

In Trans-Sahara trafficking a growing source of terrorist financing,[95] Joelle Burbank draws a distinction between the Malian Touareg insurgent's goals and those of AQIM. He explains the successful counterterrorism offensive carried out by the Algerian government drove AQIM into the ungoverned northern Malian territory. Using the Sahara as a safe heaven, the merger of AQIM and the Malian Touareg insurgents served to increase the kidnapping of western tourists and aid workers to generate ransom-based resources. Unlike AQIM, the Malian Touareg did not have announced international political goal. However, the like-minded grievance stances shared by the two groups, combined with the common Islamic religion served to reinforce AQIM numbers. Figure X depicts the broader Al-Qaida goal of establishing an international Islamic caliphate.

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[95]Burbank, 1-2, paragraph 2-3.
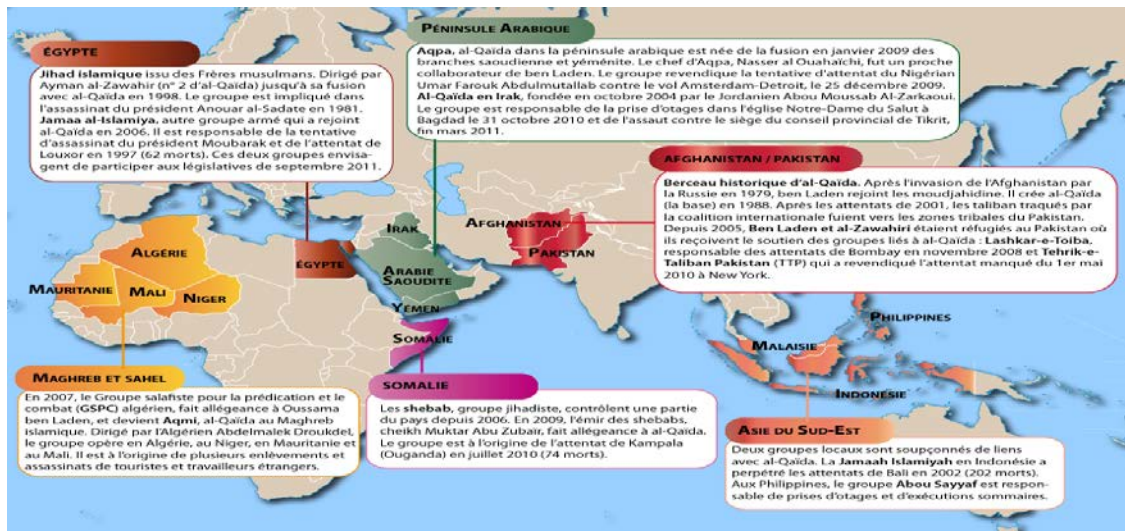
Figure 7.        The Al-Qaida Caliphate

*Source*: "The Al-Qaida Caliphate," http://www.rfi.fr/contenu/le-numero-1-al-qaida-ayman-al-zawahiri-revendique-enlevement-aout-2011-ressortissant-america (accessed 6 December 2011).

AQIM affiliates in the northern Mali have been responsible for the vast majority of terrorist activities in the greater Sahara region. For example, in 2007, AQIM claimed responsibility for placing the land mines that killed four French tourists. In 2008, they murdered twelve Mauritanian soldiers and ambushed a United Nations envoy in Niger, slaying one Canadian and one British national. In August 2009, an AQIM suicide bomber attacked the French embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania, killing a senior Malian officer who had participated in the arrest of dozen of AQIM militants.

The final straw came in January 2009. On 5 January, an AQIM affiliated Tunisian national attempted to blow up the French embassy in Bamako, the Malian capitol. Resultantly, with significant support of the Algerian military and French airborne reconnaissance, the Malian armed forces conducted a large scale operation against AQIM between August and November 2009.

Given AQIM's divergent smuggling, terrorist, and criminal activities in the Sahara, many questioned the group's Jihad ideology. With an estimated 1,000 combatants in the Sahara region, many believe AQIM's allegiance to Al Qaida is more opportunistic than philosophical. According to Joelle Burbank, the increase in AQIM attacks could be attributed to a rivalry between two AQIM sub commanders: *Mokhtar Belmokhtar* and *Abdelhamid Abu Zeid*,[96] both of who sought control of the Sahara.

In terms of recent activities, AQIM kidnappings and attacks have demanded the complete withdrawal of the French troops from Afghanistan. Furthermore, flagrant threats against France in retaliation for bursar banning have been commonplace. Additionally, Eric Schmitt and Souad Mekhennet put forth that a small number of North African fighters have returned recently returned from combat in Iraq, with the idea of joining AQIM.

AQIM's presence in the Sahara has had devastating results on the country economy in the northern Mali. Developmental activities have slowed to a crawl, if they have come to a complete stop altogether. NGOs and IAs lack the necessary security measures to operate in the northern regions. Due to the frequent and prolific use of land mines and kidnapping, tourism has become non-existent.

There are three reasons for the confluence of the Touareg's and AQIM. First, Saharan areas occupied by the Touaregs provide AQIM with a safe haven to operate and train its fascist fighters. Secondly, the two share an open relationship in coordinating

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[96]Eric Schmitt and Souad Mekhennet, "Qaeda Branch Steps Up Raids in North Africa," *The New York Times*, 9 July 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/10/world/africa/10terror.html?_r=2&scp=1&sq=al%20qaeda%20north%20africa&st=cse (accessed 7 December 2011).

operations and funding methods (drug traffic, smuggling routes, kidnapping). Finally, both oppose their current government structures; relying on one another for mutual support.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Originating from a small-scale of ethnic desire for self-governance, the Malian Touareg insurgency has undergone a metamorphosis over the past three decades. Initially undercut and controlled by the Malian government (which believed their initial breaking of the Touaregs to be the final solution), the government and rebels repeatedly reached provisional peace agreements which served only to gloss over fundamental differences. These peace agreements have easily crumbled under the weight of an impaired security situation and timid economic development. The AQIM and the Touareg insurgent coalition has greatly decreased the Malian government's ability to handle recurrent insurgent uprisings; this is especially true given the reinforcement of AQIM by the ex-Iraqi combatants.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In an effort to accurately document and illustrate the manner in which a third-world country attempts to achieve a definitive solution to an indigenous insurgency, this thesis employs a comparative case study methodology by drawing on data from other like insurgencies occurring in under-developed countries which share cultural, physical, economic, political, or religious characteristics similar to the Republic of Mali.

Finding an enduring solution to an indigenous insurgency appears to be a difficult challenge to solve, particularly if the insurgents refuse to accept the proposed end-state conditions and the insurgency assumes a recurrent nature. As with Mali, history is pock-marked with successful military leaders who failed to contain insurgencies. For example, Napoleon's miscarriage of a plan to defeat the Spanish insurgency in 1814 serves as an apt illustration.[97]

Almost two centuries later, this same desire for elusive stability drives the Malian government's attempts to eradicate the Touareg insurgency in the country's northern regions. Following a detailed examination of the country's employment of ways, ends, and means to contain the Touareg insurgency, a comparison the Malian Touareg case is offered in relation to strategies used by Senegal, Morocco and Niger to eradicate their

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[97]Thomas M. Huber, H100—*Rise of the Western Way of War Parallel Block Napoleon in Spain and Naples, Fortified compound Warfare* (Leavenworth, KS: CGSC Press, 2002), 163-174.

own domestic insurgencies. The instruments of national power will serve as the comparison's framework.

<center>Diplomacy</center>

In the immediate aftermath of Mali's independence, at the first insurgency's kick off, Malian leaders failed to fully leverage diplomacy as an effective means of countering Touareg aggression. Resultantly, the country employed a grand strategy of improving infrastructure while simultaneously promoting national sovereignty around the world rather than negotiating with internal dissidents. In the 1960s, Malian soft power was leveraged to solidify relations with France and the former USSR. Believing the gaining of foreign aid a higher priority than internal stability, bilateral ties, not counter-insurgency were the focus of Malian diplomatic efforts.

Unlike the initial insurgency, President Traore sought to employ diplomacy as a means to bring the Touareg insurgents to the negotiating table during the second uprising. Opening a dialogue between Touareg leaders and government representatives with the intention of building national unity, Traore failed to grasp the reality that the Touareg's had little to no control over the insurgent leadership.

During Traore's governance, some diplomatic soft power was brought to bear through the creation of a so-called the *Council of Wise Men*. Charged with handling misunderstandings and taking preemptive action to deflect conflicts, the council was composed of a national Imam, an Archbishop, and local tribal chieftains. Despite being used by the government as a non-lethal weapon system to combat internal discontent, the *Council* failed to sufficiently mute the Touareg desire to create their own Saharan homeland.

<center>41</center>

Although internal soft power was ineffectual in permanently halting the insurgency, the government found momentary respite by soliciting the influence of the Algerian government to assist in reaching the Accords of Tamanarasset. The Accords represented just the first of many diplomatic initiatives designed to enhance Mali's sovereignty. The government went further, establishing dynamic and influential personality groups among the Touareg. These initiatives included European participation (France), assistance of neighboring countries (Mauritania and Libya), and a number of NGOs, IGOs, and USAID. Acting in a coordinated fashion to build Malian unity, this diplomatic offensive resulted in a "Flame of Peace"[98] being ignited in Timbuktu.

By way of comparison, the Malian approach differs significantly from the Western Sahara Polisario Front case. Contrary to Mali's diplomatic offensive, the Moroccan government took offensive diplomatic measures to ensure the annihilation of Polisario separatists. Attaining military and economic support through diplomacy, the Moroccan government diplomatically isolated the Polisario threat they had faced for more than 15 years (1975 to 1991).[99]

Leveraging their allies in the UN Security Council (France and US) the government of Morocco was able to gain approval for the deployment of UN peacekeepers instead of according self-governance to the insurgents.[100] Although a final

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[98]Garcia, 77.

[99]Barry Rubin, *Middle Eastern studies: Conflict and Insurgency in the Contemporary Middle East* (New-York: Routledge, 2009), 210.

[100]Ibid., 209.

peace agreement has never been reached the parties are not bogged down in an endless cycle of conflict.

Similar to Mali and Morocco, the Republic of Senegal has faced recurrent insurgencies in its Casamance area for decades. The longest running insurgency in Africa when they concluded an agreement with government, the Casamance separatist movement was led by the Diola ethnic group in the southern Senegal.[101] Under the competent leadership of Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, the Casamance rebel's political leader, the insurgents and the Sengalese government reached a peace agreement in December 2004.

Successive Senegalese governments attempted to ascertain the root cause of the insurgency, which many have hypothesized to be the creation of an independent State of Casamance. Senegalese leaders leveraged soft power by establishing a conducive diplomatic climate with those countries providing support and sanctuary to the insurgency (most notably Gambia, and Guinea Bissau). Using diplomacy, the Senegalese were able to bring all interested parties involved, plus the insurgency branch (the MFDC)[102] to the negotiating table to give birth to a peace agreement which would end the conflict while preserving Senegal's independence.

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[101]Ernest Harsh, "Peace Pact Raises Hope in Senegal." *Africa Renewal* 19, no. 1 (April 2005): 14, http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol19no1/191senegal.htm (accessed 30 May 2011).

[102]MFDC Mouvement des Forces Democatic de la Casamance (Casamance Democratic force Movement).

That soft diplomatic power has played tremendous role in the above described insurgency resolution is unquestioned. However, diplomacy alone should not be considered the panacea for dealing with insurgencies.

<u>Information</u>

Information as instrument of national power served to orientate Malian citizens on the roots and progress of the Touareg insurgency. Information about the conflict has served to mitigate the outcome over the course of time. National as well as International media services have been front and center of the Touareg insurgency, impacting the activities of both the government and insurgents.

As the CGSC *C200 Strategic Environment* course book explains, "strategic communications must take into account demographic characteristics of different societies, and focus especially on those groups most vulnerable to extremist ideology."[103] Admittedly, strategic communication was not liberally employed during the first and second Malian governments to assist in resolving the northern insurgency. To the contrary, governmental leaders focused on portraying a notion of unity, choosing to put forth an illusion of a stable and safe northern Mali.

This internal illusion projected outwardly also served to divert the attention of the international community from the Touareg dissident movement. Only after President

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[103]C200 *Strategic Concepts,* Strategic Environment: *C207 Strategic Communication* (Leavenworth, Kansas: Ch II Vulnerable Populations, AY 10-11), 269.

Konare successfully reached the *National Pact* agreement in August 1994,[104] was an

accurate understanding of Mali's internal situation made known to the outside world.

However, starting in 1996, the national and international media broadcasts have

focused on accurately reporting information regarding the situation in the northern

regions. This accuracy in reporting the actual situation in the northern regions has

persisted into the present. Additionally, USAID and AFRICARE have financed rural

radio stations in fourteen northern region communities, repeatedly calling on the local

population to the respect of the peace agreement and move toward development.

Broadcasting in the local dialect, these radio stations are designed to serve as

multi-purpose communication centers. Communicating with one another, they provide

pre-recorded development messages broadcast via satellite and play video cassettes on

health, education, governance, conflict-management and other development-related

topics. National Radio Television (ORTM) and some international media outlets, such as

IFR (International France Radio), also engage in messaging calling for union and

security.

Owned and operated by the Malian government, ORTM employed themes and

messages targeted on the extolling the country's uniqueness through interpellation to the

northern regions in order to deny support to the insurgents. ORTM's second mission was

to disseminate daily information, broadcasting messages from the Malian authorities

helping them to spread the rumors of their strategic communication and claiming victory.

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[104]Katharine Morrison. *Africa South of the Sahara* 2003, Regional Survey of the world 32nd edition (*Africa Defense Journal*, 2003), 640, http://africadefensejournal.word press.com/?s=South+of+the+Sahara+2003%2C+Regional+Survey+of+the+world+32nd+ edition+(Africa+Defense+Journal%2C+2003)%2C+640 (accessed 10 June 2011).

The last information tool employed to galvanize the conflict adversaries were local attention groups, organized at village and tribe level. Attention groups were formed from influent Touareg community leaders who met on a regular basis, either with the Malian government or military commanders. These information exchanges helped authorities understand local issues and make useful decisions in solving problems.

Contrary to Mali, the Republic of Niger employed a different approach in regards to the Touareg insurgency. In Niger, the government refused to recognize the Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (MJN), the Touareg insurgency group. Denying the MJN legitimacy as a politically organized group with a valid claim, the Nigerian government promulgated the message though various means portraying the MNJ as a group of bandits and thieves attempting to undermine Niger's security. Where the Nigerian government concentrated its messaging internally, the MJN sought external support through international media outlets, attempting to propagandize the weakness of the Nigerien government to the entire world.[105]

Currently, the advent of increased technological means (such as the internet and satellite television) has allowed the government of Mali to employ a variety of mediums to reach the vulnerable population and provide a common understanding of the Northern Mali security situation. This messaging plays a critical function in assisting the Malian population in visualizing the actual situation and galvanize support for government initiatives to eradicate the Touareg dissidents.

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[105]IRIN: Humanitarian news and Analysis, "NIGER: New Touareg Rebel Group Speaks Out," 17 May 2007, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=72223 (accessed 27 May 2011).

Additionally, the government information efforts were powerful enough to deny Touareg messaging a foothold in the mind of the local populace. Due to the effectiveness of the government's messaging effort, most of the Malian population viewed the Touaregs as bandits, not a legitimately armed and downtrodden group. Information's power is corroborated in Army Field Manual FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which points out that "Political power is the central issue in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies; each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority as legitimate."[106]

Currently, the republics of Mali and Niger are both still dealing with the lingering Touareg insurgency. Despite multiple peace accords with disparate Touareg branches, AQIM safe zones persist in the Saharan regions. Information has served limit the size and invisibility of these sanctuaries.

## Military

At their core, counterinsurgency operations are conducted by employing hard military power to suppress or defeat insurgents soft power fails to preempt. Resultantly, any threatened regime must rely on its military might to meet and defeat the insurgency's military means. In fighting the Touareg insurgency in Mali, the first two Malian Governments weighted the military effort, providing it with increased means while searching for a definitive and lasting solution. Despite these increased means, the Malian army chose to employ traditional military ways. As a result, the Touareg insurgency maintained the initiative. This reality served to give a recurrent nature to the conflict.

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[106]Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3 24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Chapter 1, 1.1, Para 1-3.

During the First insurgency, the Malian government employed traditional military ways, harshly repressing the Touareg population in the Northern regions and by restricting their right to cross borders into the neighboring countries.[107] As the insurgency was suppressed, the government emphasized the military's presence in the northern regions. It built new military barracks, pre-positioned equipment, and named military officers as governors in the three northern regions. The employment of military might forced many Touareg people into exile and fomented anger against the government apparatuses.

The second insurgency's handling was even more heavy-handed than the first. Some writers have termed the second insurgency as the Malian civil war. George C. Kohn characterizes the conflict as an "eruption" of bloody conflict between Touareg separatist and government troops in the northern Mali city of Menaka era in late June 1990.[108]

Similar to the Touareg conflict in Niger where the Nigerian military was used to combat the Touareg guerillas, the insurgents maintained a foothold in the urban areas. Employing similar ways, such as attacking mostly the state controlled mining, military targets, and government workers,[109] the nature of the tow conflicts was very similar. For example, in both Mali and Niger, the Touareg insurgents found safe haven in neighboring

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[107]Drisdelle, 32.

[108]George Childs Kohn, *Dictionary of Wars*, 3rd ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2007), 317.

[109]Jane's, "Nigerien Tuareg Groups (Niger), Groups-Africa-Active," http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-World-Insurgency-and-Terrorism/Nigerien-Tuareg-Groups-Niger.html (accessed 30 May 2011).

countries. The recent alignment of both Malian and Nigerian Touaregs with AQIM has introduced new tactical threats into the combat environment, such the use of IEDs and mines by the insurgents. As a result, both national armies in both countries have embraced anti-mine warfare as a means of preventing casualties in the Sahara.

Another critical military means employed is the adoption and wide-spread use of security, exchanges, and cooperation (SEC) and programs to train indigenous armed forces responding to the terrorism threat in the Sahara. One such example SEC program is the Pan Sahel Initiative. The Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) is a U.S. State Department funded program in the northern African countries of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad designed to enhance border security throughout the region by rooting out arms smuggling, drug trafficking, and trans-national terrorist movement. US Army Special Operations Forces assigned to Special Operations Command Europe, are training select Malian and Mauritanian military forces on maneuver, communications, land navigation, and small unit tactics.[110] The JCET (Joint Combined Exchange Training) program, which is similar to PSI, but run by the US Department of Defense, seeks to improve military responsiveness and individual warfighting capacities of host-nation soldiers in combating AQIM in the Sahara.

<u>Economic</u>

Employing the economy as instrument of national power to solve a recurrent armed conflict does not appear to be easy for a third-world country. Each successive Malian government has taken a divergent approach in using the economy has means to

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[110]GlobalSecurity.org, "Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI)," http://www.global security.org/military/ops/pan-sahel.htm (accessed 30 May 2011).

satisfy Touareg desires. The leveraging of economic power to solve internal armed dissidence has been also observed in Senegal and Niger.

One of the fundamental causes of the Malian Touareg insurgency is the disparity of development in the northern regions of Mali vis-à-vis the south. When the first insurgency erupted, the government was focused on other internal priorities. As a result, it has sought the conflict's solution in the military dimension. Having consolidated control of the nation, little was done to financially develop the northern regions.[111] However, unlike the first insurgency, the signature of the *National Pact* agreements ended the second insurgency paving the way for economic initiatives to improve the population basic needs in the northern Mali.

In 1992, during the regime of President Konare, a large program of decentralization was launched. The decentralization policy allowed for local community self-governance. The community self-governance program permitted the withdrawal of the military as a ruling system in the Sahara region. As such, the rural Touareg communities were free to carry out the large scale rehabilitation activities as called for in the peace agreement.[112]

The government's economic strategy called for the creation of new infrastructure such as schools, roads, and bridges. Furthermore, the upgrading of health care facilities and clean water were made a priority. Simultaneously, the reintegration of ex-combatants

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[111]Keita, 11.

[112]Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail Rashid, ed., *West Africa's Security Challenges. Building peace in a troubled R World Education, Final Report presented to USAID Building Peace and Prosperity in the Casamance Ziguinchor* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2004), 242.

into the army or in other civilian structures was a definitive step toward de-militarizing the north so that economic reforms could take hold.

It is important to note that the economic objectives put forth by the Malian government far exceeded national revenues. As a result, the Malian government was forced to lean heavily on international partners for assistance. USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, OXFAM, WFP, plus some individual countries such as Netherlands, Norway, Canada, Belgium, France, Japan, and Switzerland[113] were deeply involved in Mali's development. The influence and wealth of these western organizations were responsible for many improvements in the day-to-day life of the northern population. However, these improvements were not enough to put an end to the insurgency. The following table from the UNDP (1997) provides some details of the amount of money used to build peace in the northern regions.[114]

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[113]UNDP: "The International Community as a Catalyzer for Peace," www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art1803.pdf (accessed 30 May 2011), 137, 163.

[114]UNDP Bamako at 31.10.97. *Exchange rates at the time of payment in national currency diminished the dollar value of these amounts. *Swiss Francs 200,000 promised but not yet received in cash.

Table 1.    Details of the amount of money used to build peace in the northern regions

| Donor country | Amount announced | Amount received |
|---|---|---|
| Mali | US $ 1,000,000 | 873,596* |
| USAID | US $ 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 |
| Netherlands | US $ 571,430 | 564,739* |
| Norway | US $ 2,540,092 | 2,540,092 |
| Canada | US $ 735,294 | 735,294 |
| Belgium | US $ 1,000,000 | 937,500* |
| France | FF 10,000,000 | 904,272* |
| Japan | US $ 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Switzerland | SF 200,000 | 137,931** |
| Total | US $ 9,984,747 | 9,693,424 |

*Source*: UNDP Bamako at 31.10.97. Mali, www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art1803.pdf (accessed 23 June 2011).

Similar to Mali, the West African third world country of Senegal went through a process of leveraging its economy as instrument of national power to help resolve its MFDc insurgency. Embarking on an economic offensive called the *Casamance Recovery Program* after Senegal's southern region of Casamance, the program aimed to reestablish the conditions for economic and political development in the Casamance region after the peace agreement was signed between the government and the insurgency movement group. Like Mali, Senegal has benefited from the synergic support of international aid organizations such as USAID, AAA (Africa Aid Afrique), World education, UNICEF,

and the WFP.[115] The investment initiatives have focused on the following sectors with

the amount of activity.[116]

Table 2.    Building Peace and Prosperity in the Casamance

| Sectors | Amounts |
|---|---|
| Refugee/IDP Return Assistance | $1,000,000 |
| Ex-Rebel Reinsertion/Vocational Training | 500,000 |
| Peace and Reconciliation Talks | 300,000 |
| Local Conflict Resolution/Civil Society | 650,000 |
| Saltwater Incursion Prevention | 2,500,000 |
| Sesame & Other Cash Crop Production | 750,000 |
| Grants/Capacity Building for Local NGOs | 750,000 |
| Credit and Savings/Micro Lending | 750,000 |
| Micro-Projects | 1,000,000 |
| Demining Activities & War Victims Care | 1,000,000 |
| Evaluations and Audits | 200,000 |
| SPO Management | 600,000 |
| Total: | $10,000,000 |

*Source*: USAID/SENEGALCA, Casamance Recovery Program Strategy Special
Objective, 1999, IV.

## Conclusion

The Republics of Mali, Senegal, Niger and Morocco have all used their

instruments of national power to end internal rebellions. Although it appears as though

none them possessed a comprehensive strategy to leverage the four aspects of national

power, each has tried to leverage at least a portion of the country's treasure to deal with

these indigenous threats. In each case, the economic power has lagged due to fragile

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[115]World Education, Final Report presented to USAID Building Peace and
Prosperity in the Casamance (Ziguinchor, Senegal: USAID, 2004), 17, 20.

[116]USAID/SENEGALCA, Casamance Recovery Program Strategy Special
Objective, 1999, IV.

economic conditions of these under-developed countries. Despite the investment of

precious national treasures conflicts in the Sahara, Mali and Niger continue to impair the

region's stability.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

This analysis of the Malian insurgency case study will facilitate understanding and interpretation of methods to eradicating this ongoing, recurrent, and ubiquitous insurgency. An in-depth analysis of the means employed will directly support improved strategy formulation. To date, an effective, enduring, decisive, and definitive solution has not yet been realized. This is especially pressing give that the Sahara Desert region of North Africa has become a safe haven for AQIM, which has the potential to become the Global War on Terrorism's next battleground. Give the inherent economic weakness and feeble economies of the trans-Saharan countries, Mali and its neighbors face an uphill fight against the Touareg Insurgency and AQIM terrorists.

This analysis's findings will illuminate the difficulties encountered by Third World countries like Mali to eradicate a complex insurgency. Such a complex insurgency is found in northern Mali where Touareg armed groups and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM) have take up residence. Initially, this analysis will focus on those factors which make the Touareg insurgency distinct and recurrent. Second, an examination applying the instruments of national to drive peace formation given the Touareg insurgency by studying previous insurgency lessons learned is offered. Finally, an examination of AQIM's impact on northern Mali and the appropriate governmental response given their presence as a regional and international threat is explored. These three elements of study lay the groundwork for the recommendations proposed in the last chapter.

## Facts to Consider

For almost a half-century, the Republic of Mali has committed the bulk of its available resources in combating the Touareg insurgency in the country's northern regions. Despite this commitment, a definitive solution to Mali's security problem has remained elusive. One could reasonably argue that the security situation today is worse than it was 50 years ago, despite the effort. Understanding why such a condition persists and worsens requires a closer examination of the country's physical and ethnic make-up.

## Physical Aspects

The republic of Mali is an expansive and largely uncontrolled country approximately twice the size of the state of Texas. Just over 1.2 million square miles, Mali's governmental organs are located in the capitol city of Bamako located in the southern part of the country. Mali's expansiveness can serve as both a benefit and a detriment when it comes to combating its indigenous rebellion. For example, the distance between the capitol and Gao, the first insurgency operating region, is approximately 1200 Km[117] which approximately the same distance between Tel-Aviv, Israel and Athens, Greece. This distance serves to insulate capitol from terrorist attacks, but make the logistics of combating the insurgency arduous. Undoubtedly, Mali's vast geographic distances make difficult it exceedingly difficult for the decision makers to achieve desired effects. Similar to Gao, Kidal is located more than 1600 Km from Bamako, while Timbuktu is just over 1000 Km. Figure 8 depicts the distances to each of the three northern regions.

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[117]Drisdelle, 51.

Figure 8.      Key Distances

*Source*: Google images, "key distances in Mali," http://www.google.com/search?q=
distance+map+of+mali&hl=en&rlz=1C1TSNJ_enUS457US457&prmd=imvns&source=l
nms&tbm=isch&ei=GeveToLCNsrq0gHKpKzUBw&sa=X&oi=mod (accessed 6
December 2011).


Mali's three northern regions (Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal) comprise nearly 60

percent of the country's total area.[118] Governors appointed by the central government

regulate these three administrative regions. To exacerbate the problems associated with

its size, Mali's infrastructure lacks the rail, road, and air transportation networks to

connect Bamako with the northern regions. The lack of infrastructure to transport goods

and services to the hinter lands also is largely responsible for the development disparity

between the two areas.

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[118]Travel.States.gov, "Mali Country Specific Information," http://travel.state.gov/
travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_962.html (accessed 2 June 2011).

Exacerbating the distances is Mali's climate. Once of the harshest in the world, the Saharan climate also serves to handicap many development projects in the northern regions. Not only do temperatures routinely reach beyond 40 degrees Celsius, but the hard scrabble soil makes the northern regions unattractive to agricultural investment. The lack of southern economic engagement with the north denies the cross-cultural and ethnic brazing between Mali's northern and southern peoples. In an indirect manner, the climate and soil have has also hindered Touareg integration into a greater Malian state. Consequently, the Touaregs interpret the lack of southern investment as an attempt to keep them mired in poverty as second-class citizens.

The uncontrolled and ungoverned nature of the majority of Mali's area is significant characteristic of the republic. Much of northern Mali and the Sahara are under Malian control in name only. Furthermore, the northern regions provide secure training areas non-state actors operating across northern and western Africa. The sanctuary provided by Mali's uncontrolled areas has long been safe haven for terrorist marauders. Alan Rake points to the Polisario fighter's use of Mali's vastness as key staging and Touareg recruiting areas across northern Mali for attacks into Mauritania. Gerard Chaliand corroborates Rake's assertions that the ungoverned regions have long been a thorn in Mali's side due to the recurring use of the Malian Sahara by armed terrorist groups[119]. Recently, the undomesticated Sahara has served as the nexus of the GSPC, which used the refuge to transform itself into AQIM.[120]

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[119]Gerard Chaliand, *The struggle for Africa*: *Conflict of the Great powers* (St Martins, Bengladesh: Council on Foreign Relations, 1982), 108.

[120]Stephen Harmon, Bulletin N.85. From GSPC to AQIM: The evolution of an Algerian islamist terrorist group into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and its implications for the

The repeated use of northern and western Africa as terrorist sanctuaries by the Polisario, the GSPC, and now AQIM serve as testimony to the unsecured Sahara regions in Mali. Given that the Touareg also inhabits this region, it can be concluded that insurgencies will continue to desire this location as a potential operations base. As such, there is an expectation that terrorist organizations will resort to armed conflict to retain such sanctuaries. Furthermore, it is increasingly clear that Mali does not possess the economic or military means to fully control the Sahara valley.

<div align="center">Demographic Considerations</div>

The word *Targui* is singular for *Touareg*. Occupying the Malian Sahara regions, the Touareg are known as "the people with the blue veil." According to Anthony Ham, the Touareg, are nomadic people whose origins lie with the North African Berbers.[121] Having migrated to the Sahara regions after the Arab-Islamic invasions of the 7th and 11th Centuries, the white skinned Touaregs are readily distinguishable from the dark-skinned southern Malians . Drawing on a superiority complex born of nobility claims, the Touareg represent a significant minority of the population. The Touareg's overvalued self-belief system feeds their antipathy toward the southern population, and serves to undercut any desire to forge a unified nation. Nothing represents this Touareg superiority complex more than the continued practice of slavery. For centuries (to include the 20th),

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Sahara-Sahel region (Concerned Africa Scholars, 2010), http://concernedafricascholars.org/docs/bulletin85harmon.pdf (accessed 2 June 2011), 17.

[121]Anthony Ham, *West Africa*: *People of West Africa,* Lonelyplanet.com, 2009, 77.

Touaregs have used their black-skinned brothers and sisters as slaves in the Sahara regions.[122]

Adding to the divide between peoples, the Touareg speak a substantially divergent dialect which is hardly understood by the bulk of southern Malians. The language differences serve to impede communications and draw attention to the existing cultural gap between the two peoples. Touareg look down the black skinned people, they have used many of them as slaves for centuries in the Sahara regions.[123] They live in very organized hierarchical societies, where each one knows where to stand. Among them, the chiefdom is organized and exercised by older people who make the custom laws which the Touareg population recognizes better the Malian administrative laws.

What remains clear is that there is a significant gulf in exists in appearance, mentality, dialects, cultural beliefs, and origins between the Touareg and the southern Malian population. Living in a remote and isolated area of the country has done little to bridge this divide. Additionally, the Touareg can use the geographical separation to nurture the motivation to create their own country. Unfortunately, the Touareg superiority complex based on skin color remains an immoveable impediment to Malian society progression, as the Touareg barely recognize the existence of the national authorities.

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[122]British and foreign anti-slavery society *The Anti-slavery reporter and aborigines'* Vols. 3-8 (London, UK: L. Wild 1976), 4.

[123]Ibid.

<u>Regional Influences</u>

Northern Mali offers access to many countries in North Africa which have suffered internal armed resistance or ideologically motivated political movements. North Africa's internal instability has adversely affected and nourished the Malian Sahara insurgencies. Among the regional instabilities affecting Mali are: The Polisario war in the Western Sahara; the Algerian armed political group (GIA); Libyan mercenary training camps; Niger's indigenous Touareg insurgency; and Mauritania's weakened security situation.

Environmental and demographic issues have significant direct and indirect influence on the Malian Touareg Insurgency. The Saharan terrain permits Touareg insurgents to fully prepare for combat in isolated and secure training camps while permitting them to build warfighting capacity for forays in the Malian Sahara. Bruce Johnson and Martin Cloonan put forth the hypothesis that in the mid-1980s, Libyan leader Mumwar Gaddafi trained Touareg insurgents in secure camps for the sole purpose of fighting and claiming Sahara territories in Mali and Niger.[124] Surprisingly, in these same camps, Gaddafi went so far as to train Touareg musicians to play and incite the combatants to violence and while steeling their determination.

Gaddafi has long taken a mentorship role toward the Touareg insurgents in Mali and Niger. Malian Army Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita claims Gaddafi's repeatedly made active attempts to destabilize Mali throughout the 1980s and 1990s.[125] Gaddafi's

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[124]Bruce Johnson and Martin Cloonan, *Dark Side of the Tune, Popular Music and Violence* (Burlington, USA: Ashgate 2009), 97.

[125]Karin Dillon, *Prospects for peace in northern Mali: The Touareg Rebellion's Causes* (Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC, 2007), 54.

goals, according to Lieutenant Colonel Keita, were to create a satellite state under Libyan influence by establishing contiguous Touareg territory in the Sahara. Despite Libya's underhanded shenanigans, Gaddafi has often had a seat at the negotiating table when it came to mediating conflict between Mali and its Touaregs, while at the same time providing sufficient support to the Touaregs trying impose their willing on Northern Mali which allowed them to face off against the Malian regular army. Gadaffi's continued support of the separatists has resulted in sustained Touareg combat capability with an aim of creating an independent country in the Sahara. This sustained capability has resulted in a cadre of resilient and tenacious insurgents, strong enough to persevere through three decades of conflict with the Malian armed forces.

Similar to Mali, the republic of Niger to Mali's northeast, has suffered instability for almost a half-century due to its own Touareg insurgency. Niger's Touaregs are virtually indistinguishable from the Malian Touareg, sharing the same religious motivations, nomadic culture, and separatist desires. Colin Legum points to Gadaffi's October 1980 speech where he decries "Mali and Niger for their 'systematic oppression' of their Touareg populations."[126] Gadaffi's speech points to the closeness and solidarity found between the two insurgencies. Given Gadaffi's affinity toward the Touaregs, it is not surprising to learn that rumor holds his mother to be from the ethic group.

Given the proximity, similarities, and external support, one could reasonably assume mutual support exists between the insurgents in Niger and in Mali. History has demonstrated Touareg refusal to recognize international boundaries or even the existence

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[126]Colin Legum, *Africa Contemporary Record: Annual Survey and Documents*, vol 15 (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 5.

of the Saharan nation-states. Given their free movement across the two country's borders, the Touareg regularly withdraw into Mali when pressed by the Nigerian Army and vice versa. Having a sanctuary in both countries serves to provide an open respite for the Touareg, which are not required to abide by the international border restrictions imposed on Mali and Niger's militaries. Undoubtedly, the ability to remain beyond the operational reach of the legitimate governments has significantly contributed to the chronic character of the Malian Touareg insurgency.

Surely the conflict's symbiotic nature has been a significant impediment to its resolution. Stuart Nathold dates the Mali-Niger Touareg collusion to the early 1980s, when the insurgents initiated the practice of operating in both Mali and Niger side by side to develop mutual support and nourish a climate of constant activity. Openly encouraged to mobilize against their host nation governments by Libyan radio,[127] the Touareg were never far removed from a position of open rebellion. Resultantly, one could logically conclude that as long as an insurgency persists in one country, it will do the same in the adjoining nation. The above factors point to a cooperative effort to create a Touareg satellite country in the Sahara.

Given that the rebellion's root causes and motivations stem from the same ideals of autonomy, secessionism, and economic equality in both nations, collectively dealing with the situations in both nations simultaneously only makes good sense. Any initiative, must however, take into account Libyan influence in the region. For example, Mali's first insurgency was handled well by Malian military. However, many young Touaregs fled to

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[127]Stuart Natholt, *Fields of Fire - An Atlas of Ethnic Conflict* (Extended edition) (London: Stuart Notholt Communications Ltd., 2008), 2-5.

Libya, grew-up into Libyan *fedayeen*, and served Gadaffi's interests in the Western

Sahara conflict against Morocco.

Rhéal Drisdelle reinforces the belief that Libya is deeply involved in supporting

the North African Touareg's by pointing out that after being trained by Gadhaffi, young

Touaregs were employed as mercenaries to fight alongside Saharawi insurgents claiming

their independence from the Moroccan crown.[128] Experience gained in the service of

Libya during the 1980s imbued the Touaregs with the combat savvy, and confidence

required to fuel the subsequent 1991 insurgency. The geopolitical situation in northern

Malian northern has served to directly and indirectly maintain and nourish the Touareg

insurgency, either by the imbuing Touaregs with a sense of irredentism, or by the

support, combat experience, and training received in Libya.

<u>Religion and the Alignment with Al-Qaida in Islamic Maghreb</u>

From 2006 to the current day, speculations as to the depth of the ties between the

Malian Touareg insurgency and AQIM have existed. AQIM (and its leaders) claim to

represent Al-Qaida in the Northern Africa. Operating in the same area with the Touaregs,

understanding the Touareg relationship vis-avis AQIM, is necessary. In reality, religious

fundamentalism and defending the cause of Islam in the Sahara are not the points of

junction between these two illegal non-state actors sharing the same geographical area.

Karin Dillon provides a comprehensive understanding of the Touareg's religious

orientation. Dillon puts forth that the term "Touareg" has an Arabic origin meaning

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[128]Drisdelle, 31.

"those abandoned by God."[129] He does concede that northern Malians do in fact practice

Islam. However, to the present day, Animist practices are embedded in the Touareg

devotion and practice of being a Muslim. It is indeed a fact that Touaregs have practiced

Islam that for centuries. That said, they were reluctant converts to Islam for centuries. As

such, they tend toward moderate forms of the religion. Throughout the centuries, the

Touareg population in the northern Mali has never shown signs of Islamic radicalization.

Given this history, it is highly unlikely that a deep fundamentally religious connection

between the Touareg and AQIM would be formed to support active Jihadists or Al-Qaida.

Prior to 2003, an AQIM-Malian Touareg insurgent linkage did not exist.

Established in 2006 when former GSPC leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar was driven into exile

in the northern Sahara by Algerian army, the Salafist GSPC merged with the main Al-

Qaida branch to for AQIM (Al-Qaida of the Islamic Maghreb). Deemed a significant

threat to the country's existence, the Malian government has made many a foray to expel

AQIM from Mali's national territory. Fortunately for AQIM, their nomadic mobility

combined with porous national boundaries in the region, have served to further their

existence.

From a Touareg perspective, AQIM has served as an ally in its fight to achieve

autonomy. Andre Le Sage portrays the connection between the AQIM and the Touareg

community as one of mutual convenience. In return for sanctuary among a similar

religious sect, AQIM has cultivated Touareg loyalty through bribes and smuggling

assistance in the uncontrolled Sahara.[130] This reality leads to the conclusion that the

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[129]Dillon, 20.

[130]Le Sage, 20.

relation is more economic than religious based. For the record, both AQIM and the Touareg derive significant income from transnational smuggling, hostage taking, and drug trafficking in the trans-Saharan states. Many have described the organizations as hybrid "Terrorist-Criminal Organizations." According to Algerian military sources, AQIM and the Touaregs run protection rackets for convoys smuggling drugs from South America to Europe via the Sahara.[131]

Understanding AQIM's connection to Al-Qaida's main branch also provides some insight into the relationship between AQIM and the Touareg. Although AQIM officially claimed its allegiance to Al-Qaida's leadership and goals in 2006, the relationship is not as one would initially suspect. Upon closer inspection, it appears as though convenience and economic conditions, not shared Islamic fascism, is the underlying relational bedrock.

Prior to AQIM, Al-Qaida lacked an Islamic organization able to represent Al-Qaida's interests in North Africa. Al-Qaida needed a surrogate organization to carry out operations and messaging toward the west. Secondly, as Augustus Martin[132] describes, AQIM's main reason for joining the greater Al-Qaida organization was to actualize a means of receiving financial support from Bin Laden in exchange of new recruits from Morocco, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia. Thirdly, as a surrogate in an uncontrolled area, AQIM's northern zone became a safe haven for Iraqi war religious combatants and veterans, especially those unwelcomed in their homeland.

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[131]Carol Migdalovitz, *Algeria: Current Issues* Congressional Research Service (Washington, DC: Library of Congress 2010), 3.

[132]C. Gus Martin, *The Sage Encyclopedia of Terrorism,* 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011), 36.

Given the reality of the AQIM-Touareg relationship, it becomes increasing easy to understand there is limited direct connection between the Touareg insurgents and the Al-Qaida main organization. The Touareg insurgency is chronologically dated with minimal religious fervency and focused on Touareg nationhood. As such, Touareg operations concentrate on military and psychological targets vice slaughtering infidels to create a religiously homogenous caliphate. It is important to note that some Touaregs are integrated into Malian society. Using high-profile, spectacular attacks on civil targets not only puts Touareg loved-ones at risk, but also serves to undercut societal support for the Touareg condition.

The rank-and-file Touareg's relationship with AQIM has been one of tolerance and banal support. To win the hearts and mind of the Touareg population, AQIM has adopted the strategy of giving money on one hand, while simultaneously maintaining the veiled threat of violence if cooperation wanes. Resultantly, the Touareg population's cooperation with all the sides (AQIM, Malian army, Touareg insurgents) remains integral to the success of either group. Given the Sahara's physical environment, cooperation of the population is integral to the success of any endeavor as survivability is virtually impossible without it.

<center>The Lack of Lessons Learned</center>

After almost a half-century of Touareg insurgency in the northern regions, a definitive solution has never been reached. From 1961 through to the current day, the Malian government and the insurgents have attempted to reach accords. However, the instability problems persist in the three northern regions. Given this record of ineptitude,

one could reasonable question the Malian government's ability to effectively solve the Touareg problems in the North.

Initially the first insurgency was dealt with through the use of the national army, after which the northern regions were placed under a strict military ruling system. Authorities established check points along the main routes and assumed a reinforced military posture in the region. From 1963 to 1990, northern Mali enjoyed its most stable and secure era. Resultantly, northern Mali became a significant tourist destination which generated significant income to the country's economy. Given the government's subsequent failings in dealing with the recurring uprisings, one could logically deduce that the military means were the most successful instruments of national power employed. Given the conditions created using the military, the government should have brought economic means to bear to take advantage of the space created by employing military might. This lesson remained unlearned by the Malian governmental leaders.

Unlike the first insurgency, the Malian government chose to employ diplomacy to end the second. Mali's initial insurgency was carried out by a single and unified group of Touareg rebels. Malian Army Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita claims the second was headed by four groups.[133] As a result, any diplomatic conflict resolution effort required all four groups to subscribe to any agreed upon accord. The second insurgency ended with the *Accords of Tamanarasset* signed in 1991 which stipulated certain conditions of the insurgents and the government. Some of the key provisions included the removal of military checkpoints, the reduction of government forces in the northern regions, and removal of the military from the north's civil administration.

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[133]Keita, 14.

In hindsight, the insurgent demand to remove the military presence in northern Mali was a strategic insurgent victory. Ceding control along the inter-state lines of contact effectively awarded control of the smuggling routes to AQIM and the Touareg. To make matters worse, the withdrawal of the military created a power vacuum in the Sahara. *Jane's Intelligence Digest* points out that AQIM has established training camps and recruited young volunteers to indoctrinate them with its Islamic Fascist ideology.

A second vital lesson learned should have been the agreement to assimilate Touareg irregular forces into the national Malian Army. In its willingness to fully implement the peace process, the government agreed to incorporate 2000 Touareg combatants. After a few years of collaboration between Mali regulars and the integrated Touareg soldiers, gaps and frustrations surfaced among the service members. Touareg soldiers perceived an inequality in promotions and advancement. As a result, many deserted and returned to the Sahara regions. Although some remained loyal to a greater Mali, Many deserters moved to open rebellion. Led by a National Guard Touareg Lieutenant Colonel Assan Fagaga and a Touareg Corporal named Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, the rebels attacked some military camps in Kidal, looting ammunition and weapons. Feeling to the mountainous border region with Algeria, by May 2006,[134] the peace initiative took less than half a decade to fall apart.

Strikingly, the first two sets of peace accords afforded the Touareg the opportunity to significantly undermine the Malian armed forces. Not only did many of the young Touareg soldiers desert with Malian army weapons, they also took away a

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[134]Vicenc Fisas, *2010 Yearbook of Peace Processes, School for a Culture of Peace*. (Pau, UAB: Escola de Cultura de, 2010), 24.

fundamental understanding of Malian Army tactics, as well as valuable information about military barracks, posts and camps used by the regular forces. During this period of cohabitation, Malian and Touareg soldiers were immersed in like-minded culture and practices, which provided the Touareg valuable insights about the manner in which the army would ply its tradecraft.

In hindsight, it appears naive to believe that diplomacy by itself could serve to close the divide between the Touareg and the rest of Mali. Given the Touaregs repeated disregard for negotiated accords, the lack of a solely diplomatic solution is almost assured. This is especially true given the presence of AQIM. It is almost a given that the Touareg will continue fighting under pretext that the government of Mali is not fulfilling peace agreement provisions. Over the course of time, the Touareg tactic has remained constant: negotiate a position that will provide an advantage in future conflicts and then break the peace accord under when a convenient pretext presents itself.

Mali's future desired strategic state in relation to the northern insurgency is stability restoration supported by consistent development efforts under a unified Republic set against a backdrop of regional solidity. This strategic end-state justifies the employment of Mali's elements of national power, whatever the immediate cost to achieve. By way of contrast, the Touareg strategic aim is the establishment of a fully autonomous Touareg region spanning half of the Sahara used as a safe haven for transnational terrorism and banditry.

Despite the latest peace agreement signed in Algeria in 2006 between the Touareg insurgents and Malian government, conflict continues on sides, draining resources and the national life-blood out of a nation in desperate need of both. Mali's economic

conditions economic conditions are such that continued cycles of warfare send the country spiraling toward abject poverty. That said, since 2009 when the final Touareg group joined the latest peace treaty, the international community has attempted to implement economic stimulus projects to improve Mali's fortunes. For example, in a partnership between the Malian government and the European Union, the Special Program for Peace and Security in the Northern Mali (PSPSDN) was launched. The 10 billion Cfa (5 Million USD) program is aimed at improving living conditions and creating employment in the North.

When it comes to investment, Mali must clearly focus on education, health and infrastructure development. Doing so would not only quicken Mali's developmental pace, but serve to connect the northern and southern parts of the country. Gaining recurring foreign investment for development projects remains problematic for Mali. Avoiding the recurring solicitation of international aid is precisely the reason Morocco volunteered to host the United Nations Mission in the Western Sahara.

A regional coalition based approach to the Touareg question is also required, even if the problem persists without any definite solution. In association with associated with its three neighboring governments (Algeria, Mauritania and Niger) Mali must lead a regional effort to address the ongoing threat (AQIM, Touareg Insurgency) in the Sahara. The joint basing of forces, freedom of maneuver across national boundaries, and the use of combined Task Forces with a joint staff to direct operations is a strategic move for all four countries toward regional stability.

The last element to be analyzed is the Touareg autonomy granted during the National Pact process.[135] The Pact, signed in 2006, focused on the withdrawal of military administrators from the northern regions and has established Touareg self-governance. Under the Pact, the Touareg were granted the freedom to select leaders of their own choosing.[136] However, this freedom was only granted at the local level. As a result, the gap between the central government appointed governor and the local administrators widened. Unfortunately, the Pact did allow for local leaders to raise taxes, which served to further empower the local chief with his own resources without furthering loyalty to the central administration in Bamako. In retrospect, granting the Touareg autonomy helped them to build momentum toward autonomy and further undercut integration of the Northern regions.

<u>Conclusion</u>

After decades of instability driven by a Touareg desire to apportion the republic of Mali it become evident that a number of factors have served to further Touareg desires. With a land space which equals an area of the states of California and Texas combined, Northern Mali is teeming with rebellion despite the hardships presented by the climate, terrain, and the remote location. These elements have left vast expanses of northern Mali unpopulated, uncontrolled, and ungoverned. It is a truly nomadic space which is uniquely positioned to serve as a Touareg homeland. Resultantly, the Touareg view themselves as

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[135]John P. Wilson, *Human Resource Development: Learning & Training For Individuals & Organizations* (London, UK: Kogan Page Ltd., 2005), 74.

[136]Ibid.

a distinct population in a country where they have a skin color, religious, and ethnic incongruence with the majority.

The geopolitical situation in the Sahara and neighboring countries has served to reinforce the Touareg initiative by providing sanctuary and furthering disenfranchisement claims. With Libya serving as the insurgency's primary guarantor, the Touareg have achieved a potion of strength through advantageous peace process provisions. Despite increased domestic and international investment in the north at the expense of the south, the Touareg people continue to harbor grievances and foment instability of the northern regions.

Finally, the presence of the AQIM in the Sahara has altered the conflict's fundamental nature. Dominating the national and international smuggling routes through the Sahara, The AQIM and their Touareg supporters have come to strategically dominate the area. Cooperating with the Touareg on a mutual support basis, AQIM's links with Al-Qaida remain a serious threat to a region comprised of the world's poorest countries. In conclusion, there is no end in sight to the Touareg insurgency in Northern Mali. Mali's inherent economic weaknesses and inability to adopt lessons which should have been learned under previous rebellion cycles have served to undermine any potential advancement in tamping out the Touareg Insurgency.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Since 1961, when the first Touareg insurgency stated in the northern Mali mostly

covered by the Sahara, a definite solution to the secure and safe environment in that

region has not been found yet. This research tried to analyze the different factors and

remedies driving this third-world country into a recurrent ethnic insurgency that the

Touareg people living in the Malian Saharan regions have been carrying out for decades.

Therefore the thesis has studied carefully the situation and uses the findings to make

better propositions of solutions about the Touareg insurgency in Mali and their

cohabitation with AQIM in the Malian Sahara, even if a definite solution remains a very

difficult reachable outcome for one of the World's poorest country, Mali represents.

This chapter will focus on some unexpected finding resulting during the research

to answer to the primary and secondary research questions. It will also emphasize the

solutions to the insurgency according to the findings from a strategic perspective, by

using the results in consideration with the instruments of national power (DIME

format).The Malian Touareg insurgency started from the idea of rebellion as originated

among the Touareg society following their resistance to the French colonization. [137]

During their fights before surrendering, the Touareg have been able to organize

themselves and claim their own portion of territory. That has been a proof of their valor

as tenacious and organized combatants. As such, after the departure of the colonizer, the

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[137]Cathal J. Nolan, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of International Relations*: *S-Z*
vol. 4 (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2002), 1705.

idea was great to attempt a proactive secessionist action by launching the first insurgency in 1961 against a disorganized and financially weak new country. That initiative has been seriously suppressed and oriented the conflict to a recurrent and protracted cycle.

Based on the main reasons mentioned by different sources, many other elements have reinforced the very first one along the years after colonization. The first cause advanced is the grievances resulted from the way the (military) handled the 1961 insurgency. Another reason leading to the recurrent aspect comes from their willingness to be in total autonomy in their own country. Likewise, they see themselves as different in color and ethnicity from the major part of the Malian population. That aspect is reinforced by their physical location (Sahara) where they represent the majority and share borders with some countries (Niger Mauritania Algeria) which have also Touareg population among their territory, or an agitated geo political environment.

Another important point mentioned is the lack of development in the northern Mali, which gave rise to the Touareg the idea of being neglected. More, the Libyan (Kaddafi) support to the insurgents by financing and training them or by having had them in the Islamic legion has given momentum to their fight. In contrast to these above arguments, some other sources emphasize that the Touareg tireless insurgency activities, are motivated by the idea to control the Sahara, in order to continue developing the Trans-national smuggling activities (drug, small arms, and cigarettes, human). The same reasons are justified by the presence of AQIM alongside with the Touareg rather than the religious base. As such the Malian Sahara represents then a very insecure region for Mali as well as the trans Saharan countries, the same situation which was in the Southern

Senegal, which is in Niger and the situation in the Western Sahara, before the arrival of UN( United Nations).

Even though there is a no ongoing solution on the ground, the past years in the history of the insurgency were marked with the multiplicity of peace agreements between the government and the Touareg insurgents. Such has been the case of Tamanarasset Accords, Alger Accords, and the National pact. Those indicated agreements or peace treaties were always violated by the insurgent under any type of invalid pretext.

The main threat today in the Northern Mali remains the presence of the AQIM and the replication on the Touareg permanent goal which is a continuous fight to create their country in the Sahara. This presence may affect the course of action of the Touareg or even change totally the orientation of their insurgency to act against private interest making then a bold strategic message, such as their kidnapping of westerners in the Sahara, claiming the withdrawal of their countries from Afghanistan and many other subversive activities. However an unpredictable future is assumed for the Touareg insurgency in the Sahara, due the recent death of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga and the leader of the insurgency, and the consequences of the ongoing political situations in Libya. That country has always been a sanctuary for the Touareg insurgents. Its President Mohamar Kaddafi openly was supporting the insurgents. Therefore, he was also involved in the peace process. Many sources have cited Colonel Kaddafi's backing the Touareg in Mali and Niger and dreaming to create a Touareg country in the Sahara. That's an illustration of how releveant was Kaddafi's support which can now either come from the AQIM support or the income from smuggling. To better address the lasting peace process in the Sahara in general and northern Mali in particular, the government of Mali and its regional

partners (Mauritania, Algeria, Niger) have created some coalition organizations that with the support of international funders.

<div align="center">Unexpected Findings</div>

As described in chapter 2, the research resulted in some unexpected findings which give better answers and understanding of the primary and secondary research questions. As such it remains an important fact that the Touareg people were first among the communities to submit to French dominion during the war to resist to colonialism. Then, they did not develop a feeling of being Malian which can explain in some way the recurrence of the insurgency, as described by Poulton and Ag Youssouf. Additionally, Macartan Humphreys and Habaye ag Mohamed try to give as a reason the national authorities' reaction in addressing the very first touareg insurgency. Always describing the reasons, *Rheal Drisdelle* brings up the Touareg decision to end the slave trade of poor black-skinned people, practiced by Rich Touareg leaders.

To provide an estimation of the amount of money used to handle the issue by such a poor country, the international actors like USAID, UNDP, WFP invested $25 million in development in the three northern regions. As the last element of the unexpected findings, *Joelle Burbank* qualifies the AQIM's loyalty to Al Qaida as being more opportunistic than philosophical, which better describe that organization as criminal group than Al-Qaida Jihadist.

<u>Use of the Instruments of National Power</u>

Diplomatic Angle

In addressing the Touareg insurgency in the northern Mali the government has used without any doubt its diplomacy to shape the problem. However, many efforts need to be made to achieve the nation's strategic end-state, which is a safe and secure northern Mali in a country of unity in diversity. It remains today necessary to look for a solution at a regional or international level for a better integration of the Touareg ethnic group. The Touareg are present in almost all the countries along the Sahara. The governments of those countries should gather around a general solution, by putting in place a regional organization or entity dealing with the issue of the Touareg as a minority in those respective countries. That would then avoid tensions in Niger and Mali, and would characterize the appropriate way to handle the Touareg concerns. Instead of single and internal decision, a multinational decision seems more effective, because even if they are in different territories, they remain the same people.

For what is the specific case of Mali, the government has always dedicated all of it effort to solve the security failure in the Sahara as directed by the National Strategies for the development of the Northern Mali. But since the decentralization process military administration has been weaken in those regions. Reinforcement of the mixed military-Touareg administration would solidify the execution of government intent in the Sahara and would help to balance the power of the local and tribal leaders who are very influential in the region.

The current and recent threat in the Sahara, that is AQIM, should be seriously addressed through a diplomatic coalition effort between Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and

Algeria and the international powers which have been fighting terrorism for more than a decade now (USA, UK, France or other partners) that will allow an effective exchange on how to approach the key leaders or political wings of this terrorist organization in North Africa. That remains key in eradicating the activities of AQIM in the sub-Saharan region. Countries in the area (Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Fas, Chad, Libya, and Niger) should also extend political and diplomatic relationships to deny safe haven to the insurgents or AQIM; its true that all insurgency is enhanced by the sanctuary where it can build momentum. In the Sahara insecurity, Libya has been accused by many sources of sheltering the insurgents during difficult combat operations. So, including Libya in the regional level decision making could bring a new approach to the problem solving process in the region.

## Informational Effect

Any insurgency retains the people or population as its center gravity, so for a counterinsurgency operation to be successful one must know how to influence that population to weaken its support to the insurgents. In the case of the Touareg insurgency the use of the Information by the decision maker would play a major role in sensitizing the local population to reduce support to the insurgents or terrorist activists. To better utilize information, the government priority should be reinforcing the existing media services (radio and newspapers, social medias), to emphasize the message of unity and the Touareg's appurtenance to the territory of Mali. Such a message could alter the recurrent idea of fighting for independence and could also soften the grievances the population in this area has nourished against the ruling system; they will then consider themselves more Malian than anyone else.

Those media services should broadcast in local languages and bring the message to the maximum of population.There should exist a coalition of media structures in the region to control insurgents' information, and keep it out of the public domain. Again, effective communication between leaders and the population is very important. It develops confidence in the leaders and educates the population by forging their sense of patriotism and unity. As already mentioned, the Touareg society is nomadic, they move from place to place and have a very light notion of patriotism except for looking for a specific interest. The information focus should be to create a better integration of the southern and northern population in Mali; a well-integrated population pushes away the risks of civil war in a country. Additionally messages should also tackle the issue of AQIM in the region to let the population know how dangerous the terrorism organization is, and how destructive it can became in operating in their environment.

Military Measures

An effective counterinsurgency strategy privileges the military option as the backbone of the solution. The Touareg insurgency in the Sahara and the AQIM are not an exception to that rule.In view the physical aspect of the Sahara regions in Mali, a solution remains very complex.

Also, the government and military leaders must create strategies for how to build more cooperation between the army and its population in the north, so that to improve operational intelligence. Concerning the space of the Sahara, it appears difficult to control. The reinstallation of the military post stated in the government new program (PSPSDN) sounds promising. It will project troops all over the Saharan key point to

restrict enemy access to those locations. Including, the control of the main the routes used by the insurgents and AQIM to carry out their smuggling activities.

A regional solution seems to be the only option for the security of the large Sahara valley; efforts are always underway by the creation of a joint force regrouping Mali, Niger, Algeria and Mauritania. That coalition force will focus on the security along the Sahara valley specifically against AQIM and its Touareg allies in Mali and Niger. The presence of these criminal groups represents a serious threat to the stability of the region. they provide a secure road for the drug coming from Colombia straight to the Sahara, and then to Europe through Libya and by sea. The primary job of the coalition should be to cut those routes.

At that stage, support from the coalition partners (USA, UK, France) is sine quo non to the success of the counterinsurgency operation, because the regional troops may or may not have enough experience in counterinsurgency.

Considering the environment in the Sahara, the population is fast in transmitting intelligence, so a movement of troops is immediately communicated from village. To village, to act with surprise the coalition troops must possess ISR assets to cover the terrain. Lieutenant Colonel Oumar Diarra, (currently attending the US War College, and who use to be Chief of Operation in the staff in the command of Kidal) when asked by email[138] locates the military solutions in three major points: "the redeployment of the military outposts along the main supply routes; the collection of intelligence and the

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[138]LCol Oumar Diarra, Student at the US War College, Electronic correspondence with author, 14 July 2011.

conduct direct against the terrorist." These should be the relevant activities for the coalition's troops.

Concerning the regional solution against AQIM, the decision to send troops in the Sahara should be supported by training in counterterrorism. Those troops have also no past experience facing a terrorism organization. In that regard, Algeria remains the key location because AQIM originated in Algeria and its activists are mostly from Algeria. They share the same realities and culture.

Countries like Mali, Mauritania and Niger should focus on developing human intelligence among the local population and make it available to the military. If not stopped, the AQIM organization may grow in the coming years, as the situation in the region is changing (political situation in Libya, death of the head of the Touareg insurgency). These recent changes could bring new situation in the partnership of the two activist groups. Also the end of the combat operations in Iraq with the death of Ben Laden created different situation, which may affect the AQIM organization in the Sahara, or make it more organized and powerful by receiving experienced veterans of the middle east battlefield.

Another important solution is the use of the airpower (strategic air strike) to dismantle the AQIM training camps in the different countries in the Sahara, and the staging locations of the Touareg combatants in the mountains across the Sahara, and between Kidal and Algeria. An effective use of air power necessitates a huge economic effort from the regional coalition. There, too, support from the western partners is more than welcome. As long as AQIM is operating in the Sahara, there will be no end to the Touareg activities in that region in Mali as well as Niger. This situation should be taken

under urgent consideration. The longer this terrorist organization operates in the Sahara, the more influence it will get among the world's terrorist movements.

Putting regional pressure on the AQIM, will restrain its activity, because if all the Saharan countries converge their effort, or unify to fight AQIM, there will not be any sanctuary for it, and it will surrender. The countries supporting or providing sanctuary should face international sanctions, either economic or diplomatic. Likewise, they should not be accepted inside the regional organizations (ECOWAS, MENAO).[139] AQIM should be now considered as a global threat.

<center>Economic Improvement in the Sahara</center>

Considered as one of the most fundamental reasons of the Touareg rebellion in the Northern Mali, the economic solution remains the most complex and critical.

Known as a poor country the Republic of Mali has always struggled to provide the minimum basis of welfare to its population. That economic weakness has been differently understood by the northern population who think that they are excluded from sharing the country's wealth. As described in the previous chapter, the Malian economy relies basically on agriculture, fishing and external aids. In such a condition, it is very difficult to satisfy all the components of the population. Additionally the climate in the Sahara does not allow any of these economic activities. However, the government has analyzed the specific case of the northern region and tried its best to address some crucial needs in welfare and infrastructures, such as building hospitals, schools, power facilities and providing clean water. Economic improvement is a basic condition to mitigate both

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[139]ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States. MENAO: Middle East and North Africa Organization.

the Touareg and AQIM conflicts in the Sahara. It is an known that the 90 percent of the Malian population live in the southern part of the country that draws the most investment. However, following the second insurgency up to now the government and its international partners have been directing many development projects and enterprises to the northern part. An example of that is the PSPSDN (Programme Spécial pour la Paix la Sécurité et le Développement dans les régions du Nord du Mali), which focuses on the amelioration of wellbeing in the north. Such initiatives keep the Touareg population from the emigration to neighboring countries and create a prospect of employment and development for them.

Again, regional economic cooperation is needed to shape and stop the trans-national smuggling which affects the economic improvement in the different Saharan countries. It would be important to design a regional organization in the countries along the Sahara (Mauritania Mali, Niger, and Algeria) to control the movement of goods between these countries. As noted by many sources, smuggling constitutes one of the Touareg insurgency and AQIM sources of income. Customs services of the concerned countries should be assisted by the military with the necessary equipment to pursuit or deny their smuggling activities.

To better deny the economic supply of the two organizations in the Sahara, an international initiative is necessary to bloc or persuade their backer from the outside world and in Europe as well. The AQIM, like the Touareg, have always benefited from individual donors who can be Muslim individuals in the Arab world (Al-Qaida), or Touareg immigrants in Europe. Cutting those sources will economically isolate the activists and push their organizations to collapse.

Northern Mali is a potential tourist zone; if safe, it generates an important sum of income every year in the Malian budget that shows that economy, security and development are tied. The main challenge for an underdeveloped country to establish a safe environment for its population. In Mali and in Niger many projects have been financed by international organizations to help these countries to bring improvement in the lives of their populations in the Sahara.

In his email,[140] Captain Issa Bagayog who is attending the Malian Staff College and worked previously as a staff officer in Tessalit, a remote city in the Sahara, at the border with Algeria commented on conditions, based on his cohabitation with the local population and after assessing the level of development in that locality, the captain mentioned that the key action to change the mind of the population from supporting the insurgency or terrorists is to create employment, and build hospitals, schools and roads in the northern area.

Supporting the same idea, one of reasons of the persistent insurgency in the Sahara is the enclosure of the region. Effort should focus on building roads inside and between countries, to make the Sahara a "roadside village." If so, there will be no place to organize criminal activities and stay in impunity. The roads will open the region to the external world and to the southern population who would easily get access to their compatriot Touareg in the Sahara and facilitate the integration of the populations. That can open the path to a very efficient way to mitigate the recurrence of the insurgency, which is the integration of the different population and ethnic groups.

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[140]Electronic correspondence received by author, 6 June 2011, from guimbala1@yahoo.fr.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Since the thesis focused on the Touareg insurgency in Mali, there are numerous areas for future research:

1. The Touareg insurgency in Niger

2. The Touareg societies and Instability in the Sahara

3. AQIM in The Sub-Saharan Region and its links with the Boko Haram (Nigeria).

4. Drug trafficking and Smuggling in the Sahara

The first topic will show how and why the Touareg have also revolted in Niger. That will demonstrate the point of junction with the case in Mali. It will also emphasize the reasons for the insurgency, which could not be developed in this thesis.

The second Topic will investigate how Touareg have contributed to the insecurity in the Sahara region. It will also explain the sources of their troubles and the consequences in the region.

The third Topic seems to raise more interest than the two previous due to the sensitivity of the problem. It will examine the creation and dominance of the AQIM in the region and will tackle the implications in the regional countries and the entire world. It will also be an opening to understand how a sub Al-Qaida cell or allied group works. How they are organized? How deep is it involved in radicalism Islam or Jihad?

The last topic focuses on the drug network in the Sahara and its smuggling activities. It would focus on the how drugs are trafficked from Latin America, to the Sahara. How and where it goes? And who is behind it. The above four topics reveal important concerns which could not be deeply addressed in this thesis.

Conclusion

The Touareg situation in the Sahara and its alignment with AQIM is a serious threat which goes beyond the capability of the Malian government or the coalition to be efficiently addressed. Solid cooperation between countries located along the Sahara and their international partners remains key to bring a military, economic, information and economic solutions to these two ongoing scourges and establish a safe and secure environment for the well-being of the different populations and the stability of the region. The definite solution to the Touareg recurrent conflict lies in the use of the military as an instrument of national power supported by the three others to enhance the stability and development process.

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